

PHILOSOPHY OF THE CREATION IDEA

BY

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PHILOSOPHY OF THE CREATION IDEA¹

I. Introduction

a. "Philosophy has at times been honoured as the most excellent form of science, and at other times rejected as a form of fiction or speculation; it has been seen as the leader and guide of all the sciences but occasionally also been denigrated as the handmaiden of one or more of the sciences; it has been lauded for the magnificence of its truth but also been taunted as evil and a pagan abomination; it has occasionally been broadened to include all the sciences but it has also been narrowed down to mere epistemology and methodology; it has been seen as a propaedeutics for all forms of learning but also been rejected as a form of insignificant sophistry; it has been praised for its practical significance regarding life questions; yet it has also been despised because of its escapism and impractical views"². Add to this impressive array of discord regarding Philosophy and its tasks, the current (tiresome) tendency of reducing Philosophy to linguistic analysis and Existentialism, as well as the brave approach of Teilhard du Chardin and the refreshing interest of many natural scientists in Philosophy³.

¹ *Calvinistic Philosophy* comes in various forms and nuances (more about this later). At first, I named my own approach a *Theistic Philosophy*; cf. *Die Vaderland* (Johannesburg, 1927), *Woord en Geest* (The Netherlands, 21.10.1927-16.12.1927) and the *Tydskrif vir Wetenskap en Kuns* (Old Series, IX, 3). From about 1930 onwards, I began calling it *The Philosophy of the Creation Idea* (cf. *Die Wagting* (Potchefstroomse Universiteitskollege, Feb. 1932 –Jun. 1933), *Die Nuwere Wysbegeerte aan die Vrije Universiteit* (Van Schaik, 1933), *Die Wysbegeerte van die Skeppingsidee* (De Bussy, 1933), *Iets oor Calvinistiese Wysbegeerte* (in *Koers in die Krisis III*, Pro Ecclesia, Stellenbosch, 1941), the series of articles in *Koers* (Potch. Univ. College, VII, 6 – IX, 2). For later publications on the *Philosophy of the Creation Idea*, see my list of publications. Despite following my own approach since the 1930's, I have always attempted to work in close liaison with *The Philosophy of the Revelation Idea* (H Bavinck, V Hepp) and the *Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea* (D H Th Vollenhoven and H Dooyeweerd). I hereby gratefully acknowledge that I have learnt much from these two nuances of *Calvinistic Philosophy*. In this article, we firstly intend discovering the essential nature and features of Philosophy, then advance to a brief discussion of several nuances of *Calvinistic Philosophy*, and then briefly outline the nuance that I have been calling *The Philosophy of the Creation Idea*. We cannot enter into more detail here. Our outline of this approach will be sketchy, but it will provide the main ideas. My book *Beginsels en Metodes in die Wetenskap* (Pro Rege-Pers, Potchefstroom, 1961; 2nd ed: De Jongs-Boekhandel, Johannesburg, 1969) as well as my other publications contain more exhaustive discussions of matters that I touch upon in this article.

² See my article *Wysbegeerte* (in *Beginsels en Metodes van Hoër Onderwys*, Van Schaik, 1949).

³ This is quite different from the attitude of natural scientists in the previous century that virtually ostracised Philosophy from the synagogue of the special sciences; see my Academy paper *Die vraag van die bedreiging van die natuurwetenskaplike wetenskapsidee in historiese perspektief* (*Die Tydskrif vir Wetenskap en Kuns*, new series, XVIII, 2; henceforth BNW).

I shall not attempt to provide a philosophical *apologia pro domo*. Philosophy's right to exist and its necessity will be revealed through what I shall present here.

As far as the term 'philosophy' (*philosophia*, to love wisdom) is concerned, we should not stumble over the words 'wise' and 'wisdom' (*sophia*). These words already had interesting meanings and histories in ancient classical times. We shall limit our discussion to only one meaning of the word *philosophia* because of its relevancy to our present discussion⁴. Already in ancient times the word *philosopheoo* embraced the notion of "practising the sciences", "to be scientifically involved in", "to carefully study or investigate something and / or to treat it scientifically"; *philosophia* had the meaning of "love of science", "love for scientific practice"; *philosophos*: "*belover of science*" "a friend of learned investigations".

In those times, philosophy embraced science in its totality; an example of this is Aristoteles' philosophy that embraced Theology, Philosophy in its essential meaning as used in this discussion, as well as special science investigations. Philosophy and Theology only parted ways during the Middle-Ages, with tension occasionally mounting thereafter between them. From the Middle-Ages onwards until our modern epoch, the term 'Philosophy' embraced proper Philosophy as well as all the special sciences or disciplines. It was only later, more pertinently during the latter part of our modern epoch, that Philosophy and the special sciences or disciplines diverged and began distinguishing themselves more rigidly from one another⁵.

The question whether Philosophy (alongside and as distinct from Theology⁶ and all the other special sciences or disciplines (such as Mathematics, and the natural and cultural or human and social sciences) as well as the inter-sciences or intermediate disciplines) should be regarded as an actual or genuine form of science⁷ will of course depend on what one assumes science to mean⁸.

⁴ See Dr A H G P van den Es: *Grieksche Woordenboek* (J B Wolters, Groningen, 1896).

⁵ We find the term (name) 'Theology' in the work of Aristotle. He uses the word to refer to the doctrine of the Archê, the pure form, thinking about thinking/contemplation.

⁶ Subjects such as Sociology and Psychology succeeded in liberating themselves from the womb of Philosophy only as recently as the second half of the 19th century to become self-standing disciplines (i.e. having distinct features).

⁷ We distinguish between genuine and true sciences . A genuine scientific discipline can in some ways be proven to be either true or false (incorrect). For a taxonomy of disciplines, see among others my article in *Koers in die Krisis II* (already mentioned above; henceforth *KIDK*), my *Beginsels en Metodes in die Wetenskap* (already mentioned above; henceforth *B en M*), and my article on *Christian Scholarship* in volume II (*Oorsprong en Rigting*), as well as my Academy paper in 1967 – *Proceedings of the SA Akademie vir Wetenskap en Kuns* (henceforth *SAAR*).

⁸ See *BNW* and *B en M* and article III in volume I (*Oorsprong en Rigting*).

We will refrain from discussing the many distinguishable (and in many cases mutually conflicting) ideas of what science entails, but will rather concentrate on our own view of science and what it entails. The question whether Philosophy can be regarded as a science gives rise to two problems, namely: Can we distinguish a particular field of investigation for Philosophy, and by implication, a particular and distinctive task and purpose for it? To what extent can practising Philosophy bear signs of a scientific nature?

b. Philosophy has no right to exist if one cannot indicate its own particular field of investigation that is not already covered by another specific discipline.

i. I recently read in a *history book* that *Jan van Riebeeck arrived at the Cape in 1652*. This is a statement in a special science, one that enables a philosopher to address several questions to the historian. The historian assumes answers to these questions but does not pose such questions and he/she does not investigate supposed or assumed questions and answers. For instance, what is 1652? A number. But what is a number? Discrete quantity. But what is discrete quantity as such? What is the meaning of 1652 AD? It is a date. But what is a date? Artificially localised time. Why artificially? What is time as such? What is local time or time locality? What is *the Cape*? A place at the southernmost tip of Africa. What is a place? A local space. What is space as such, and what is local space? What is the meaning of *arrived at*? An event. What is an event as such? What type of event is *arriving at*? An accountable and responsible as well as a free human action. What is an action? What are accountability, responsibility and freedom as such? What is *Jan van Riebeeck*? A name? What is a name? Language. What is language as such? Who was *Jan van Riebeeck*? A human being, a person. What is a human being as such, and what is a person as such? What did Jan van Riebeeck actually do? He performed an historical deed. But what is historical, and what exactly is history as such? Historians assume answers to these and other similar questions – at least to the extent that they find them relevant to their inquiries – to be already known, and investigate their field of specialisation on the basis of these answers. They do not penetrate deeper into these questions. But still, these questions deserve to be scientifically investigated – all the more so because they are fundamental questions. Fundamental questions like these reveal to us something of the field of Philosophy. Questions such as these pertain to the foundational aspects of the special discipline

known to us as ‘History’. The knowable (that which can be known), to which these foundational questions refer, are what we call primordial idions (Afrikaans: *oeridionne*)⁹.

It is possible, *mutatis mutandis*, to penetrate in the same manner the foundational concepts of every other specific science or discipline (and in doing so, the primordial idions to which they refer or which they presuppose to exist). In so doing, we lay bare a part of the scholarly field covered by philosophical investigations. Let us take an example. In a natural science book we could encounter (in alphabetical order) the following basic concepts (and of course the primordial idions to which they refer): cause, energy, fact, function, law, matter, movement, measuring, method, nature, number, observation, probability, reality, space, time, reflection, truth, weight, and so on. What exactly, in fundamental terms, is each of these as such? Natural scientists presume – to the extent that this question seems relevant to their investigations - the answer to this question to be known and available, and investigate their field of specialisation

⁹ I call the following primordial *idions*: for instance, to be aware (of something), to experience a bitter taste (of something), a boat, a diamond, a specific objective, a family, the spoken word, a drop of honey, a court order, a specific piece of art, an insight (into a particular matter), love (of a child for its mother), a certain human being, a particular cause, a specific place, roundness (of a ball), a specific form of distress, loyalty (as expressed in an act of friendship), a quarrel (between certain people), a particular waterfall, a particular Divine Revelation, and so on. I could have called them *data* or *that which is immediately at hand*, but this would have meant that primordial ideas should be seen from the perspective of knowing and acting persons. I also could have called them *objects* or *Gegenstände*, but that would have meant that we have to see them in relation to *subjects*. I could have called them *phenomena*, but they are not phenomena in terms of their ‘essence’. To call them *things*, *matters*, *somethings* are also unacceptable for obvious reasons. I could have called them *beings*, but the term *being* does not adequately express the particular own “thereness” of each. I can go on mentioning other terms that, in my opinion, do not encapsulate exactly what I have in mind. Each of them is an *idion* (derived from the Greek *idion*). Calling them idions encapsulates the notion that each of them possesses a positive unique own thereness/reality which distinguishes it from all other *idions*. *Idion* need not be a strange term since we encounter it in many other words, such as idiochromosomes, idiographic, idiolatry, idiomatic, idioarchic, idiomorph, idionomatographic, idiom, idiopathy, idiosyncrasy, idiothermic, and so forth. *Idions* does not only express the ‘own uniqueness’ or reality of *beings*; even the relationships and coherences between beings are *idions*. The recognition of *idions* (each insufficient in itself) does not lead us to accept pluralism. (Cf. my *Die kosmiese dimensie van gebeurtenisse* in *Philosophia Reformata*, Volume 294, 1964, J H Kok, Kampen, The Netherlands, as well as the same article in volumell of *Oorsprong en Rigting* for a rather more detailed discussion.)

Some idions differ from others only in a relative sense. Others differ radically (and are therefore irreducible to one another). An idion that differs radically from all others, and that therefore cannot be reduced to any other idion, is a primordial idion in my book, in other words, a cosmically original idion. Idions can be idostances or appertaining idions (see later).

We call our concept(ion) of an primordial idion a foundational term or a basic idea. The term ‘concept’ refers to something that can be intellectually grasped; the term ‘idea’ refers to something that transcends intellectual understanding (such as the ‘creatureliness’ of the cosmos). Of course, all idions are creatures (they belong to creation (*in casu* the cosmos)); in other words, God Himself is not an idion.

accordingly. But it is Philosophy that takes pains to investigate each of these questions (foundational concepts, primordial idions) as such at great length and in depth.

In passing, I would like to draw attention to the fact that the special subjects or disciplines benefit from Philosophy engaging in such inquiries. Broadly speaking, such foundational concepts / primordial idions always have an impact on the scientific results and theory construction in the different special sciences or disciplines. Take for example the foundational concept (or primordial idion) ‘law’ and its role in the various special sciences or disciplines, and the foundational concept (or primordial idion) ‘human being’ and its role in, for instance, Psychology or Sociology.

ii. Van Riessen calls questions pertaining to foundational concepts or rather primordial idions ‘boundary problems’¹⁰. Boundary problems, according to him, are those problems not investigated by the special sciences or disciplines themselves. They therefore belong to the field of philosophical (and occasionally also theological) investigation. All forms of science and scholarship encounter difficult problems from time to time, but boundary problems seem to pose a special challenge. It can be rather difficult to approach them scientifically, to delineate them precisely and to find answers and solutions for them. They can be approached in so many different ways. Deep – even cardinal – differences of opinion exist about them (as well as about how they should be investigated and what the results of such investigations should entail). To illustrate this, we only need to refer to the following widely differing views (in alphabetical order) regarding the human being as human being, and the impact of each view on anthropologies in various special sciences: Calvinism, communism, evolutionism, existentialism, fascism, humanism, liberalism, materialism, national socialism, naturalism, pantheism, rationalism, Roman Catholicism, voluntarism and several others. In addition to this, boundary problems are closely aligned to the pre-scientific world- and life-view (among others religious convictions)¹¹, in which science and scholarship historically and fundamentally find their origins and from where they receive real and profound significance. However, irrespective of how difficult such boundary problems might be, and whatever the differences of opinion behind them, Philosophy should not

¹⁰ See H van Riessen’s *Wat is Wijsbegeerte?* In the *Bulletin van die Suid-Afrikaanse Vereeniging vir die Bevordering van Christelike wetenskap* nr. 11, Nov. 1967.

¹¹ See footnote 7 as well as my *Kristendom en Wetenskap* (Van Schaik, 1929), *Calvinism and the Current South African Outlook* (in *Calvinism in the Times of Crisis*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, USA, 1947), several different articles in *Koers* and in *Die Gereformeerde Vaandel* (Stellenbosch) as well as my book *Oorsprong en Rigting* vol. I (Tafelberg Publishers, 1967; henceforth O EN R).

shirk its task and duty to investigate them scientifically. No scholar should shy away from this task and duty! Neither should the philosopher! The difficult problems that Philosophy seems to deal with should not detract from its scholarly and scientific character: it has a separate field of investigation, with a concomitant duty and purpose.

Having said all of this, I personally prefer not to begin an investigation by speaking of boundary problems. Primary emphasis on ‘boundary’ seems to bestow negative meaning on it: up to here and no further! One should start out from positive qualifications and distinctions; discovery of relevant boundaries should follow secondarily from this approach; then one should be on the alert for boundary violation¹². Personally, I prefer to talk about ‘problems of origin’ as a philosophical subject matter, instead of ‘boundary problems’. In my opinion, it is typical of philosophers, as evidenced by the history of Philosophy, to penetrate to the origins, the first and / or last grounds, in some cases even to *the Origin*, the Archê (to which we will return later), but also to the radical (radix: root) diversity existing in reality (the *cosmos*¹³), which cannot be reduced to anything else in the cosmos, and which cannot be explained or understood in its originality in terms of anything else in the cosmos. These are exactly the problems of origin that provide Philosophy with its special type of difficulties. Anyone attempting to explain exactly what (for instance) time as time is, will know and understand this. Philosophy has occasionally been called a foundational or depth science because it has problems of origin (primordial idions, primordial ‘phenomena’, fundamental or foundational concepts) as its field of investigation. This description of Philosophy’s field of investigation confronts philosophers with a glorious and engaging – Toynbee would have said a challenging – task. Having said all this, however, this task is in my opinion *strictu sensu* no challenge (God does not challenge people) but rather a God-given, and therefore compelling, vocation that cannot be avoided.

Opinions differ concerning the question whether Philosophy should regard all origins as part of its field of investigation. Firstly, we have to distinguish between *the Origin* (Archê,

¹² See my *Wysbegeerte van die Skeppingsidee*, p. 3 (HAUM, 1933.).

¹³ In distinction to the heavens and its angels, the term *cosmos* refers to the ‘earthly created universe’; matter, plants, animals and human beings; nature, culture and worship (also religion). The term ‘cosmos’ should not be understood in terms of its Greek meaning.

the Absolute and All-sufficient) *and* all other relational¹⁴ cosmic origins (*archai*¹⁵: the radical, mutually irreducible diversity). Many philosophers contend that Philosophy does not only have the origins (*archai*) as its field of investigation but the Origin (the Archê) as well. In my opinion, however, Theology¹⁶ is the science of (the revelation of) the Archê, the Absolute, the All-sufficient as well as of the dependence of everything else on the Archê (the Origin). Christian Theology is therefore the science of the revelation in His Word and in his creation of the Triune God Himself and of his relationship to everything else. In my opinion, Philosophy is the science of the other origins (the coherent radical diversity) in and of the cosmos. We need not discuss the relationship between Theology and Philosophy¹⁷ any further in this context. In the second place – with reference to the relational cosmic origins – some philosophers (such as those restricting Philosophy to theory of knowledge cum linguistic analysis or to philosophy of existence) are inclined to restrict the field of Philosophy to the investigation of only some of the origins. In my opinion, Philosophy should investigate each and every origin (all radical diversity) that can be discerned in the cosmos. It is therefore in a certain sense a universal science: it has to do with the total universe, the complete created cosmos, the ‘earthly created universe’¹⁸. In brief then, questions regarding origins form a part of Philosophy’s field of investigation.

iii. All these origins (the radical diversity, primordial idions, primordial phenomena and foundational concepts) cohere; they are bound together and intertwined in countless ways. Another part of Philosophy’s field of investigation is this coherence of cosmic origins (of the radical diversity). This is another study or investigation not undertaken by the special sciences or by Theology. Such investigation needs to be done, however. This is a field that belongs to Philosophy; it has to investigate all coherences in the cosmos as a totality. This is why Philosophy is sometimes seen as the science of totality (or ultimate science). In this sense it can be regarded as a universal science, in other words, of the (in my opinion) created universe. The same applies for reductionistic forms of Philosophy (those that restrict the field of philosophical investigation, such as linguistic

¹⁴ The contradistinction between ‘absolute’ and ‘relative’ is incomplete. ‘Der dritter im Bunde’ is relational. Each relationship depends on certain fulcrums. If the fulcrums are similar, then the relationship can be regarded as ‘relative’. Where the fulcrums are dissimilar, the relationship is ‘relational’. See my article on the human being as image of God in *O EN R* vol. I.

¹⁵ Aristotle also distinguished between Archê and archai. We attach different meanings to these terms than Aristotle.

¹⁶ See footnote 7.

¹⁷ See footnote 7.

¹⁸ See footnote 13.

analysis or Philosophy of existence) – even they are totality sciences, if one looks closely at what they attempt to do. They also arrive at questions concerning totality by looking at such problems from their respective foundational concepts or primordial idions or from their respective particular philosophical approaches.

iv. We need to make a few further distinctions here, because the term ‘totality’ has two meanings, among others. We discussed one of them already: totality as the universal coherence of the radical diversity. In line with this meaning, Goethe, for instance, views Philosophy as the science which traces *wie Alles sich zum Ganzen webt*. But on the other hand - apart from the fact that some Philosophers consider the Archê (or the Absolute, the All-sufficient) to be part of the field of philosophical investigation – totality can also have the meaning of an original unity of which (to use a hackneyed but useful and necessary expression) the sum is more than its parts (and also more than the universal coherence of its parts). This problem is sometimes formulated as the problem of reality as reality (the problem of reality as such; or, of the cosmos as cosmos, the cosmos as such). Since in my opinion Theology should be seen as the science of God’s revelation of Himself and of his relationship with all things, and Philosophy as the science that has (created) cosmos as such as its field of investigation, we could formulate this problem as follows: What is the cosmos as cosmos (as such), what is its fundamental nature, and what is its fundamental meaning? We could call this a question regarding the ‘formal unity’ of the cosmos in order to distinguish it from the question regarding the ‘material unity’ of the cosmos – as pertaining to the first meaning of totality, viz. that of the universal coherence of the radical diversity in and of the cosmos¹⁹. Both of these questions belong to the field of Philosophy.

v. Philosophy also has to deal with another fundamental problem. To explain this, we commence with the question: Who or what is a human being, and what is his or her place and function (role) in the totality of the cosmos? We can *mutatis mutandis* ask the same question with respect to each and every cosmic origin (primordial idion, ‘primordial phenomenon’, the radically distinguishable given) as well as – to formulate it differently – to every fundamental concept such as number (discrete quantity), matter, life, consciousness, language, morality²⁰, history, and so on.

¹⁹ We shall later refer to this totality of the cosmos as cosmos (as such) as ‘primary totality’, and to totality as the universal coherence of the radical diversity as ‘secondary totality’. The latter should always be viewed in the context of the former.

²⁰ See my article on morality (ethics) in *O EN R*, I.

vi. By saying this we have now discovered four main problems in the field of Philosophy that can be formulated as follows (in philosophical-material sequence in accordance with our view of Philosophy):

1. What is the cosmos as cosmos, its fundamental nature and meaning ?
2. What is the radical (mutually irreducible) diversity in creation?
3. How does the radical diversity in cosmic totality cohere?
4. What is the nature, meaning, place and role of a radically distinguishable cosmic ‘something’ (primordial idion; origin) in cosmic totality?

Because human beings possess a unique nature and role in the cosmos, and because all forms of science (including Philosophy) presuppose somebody who knows (a knower), and something that may be known (the knowable), we may regard the problem *human being* and the problem *knowledge* as respectively the fifth and the sixth main problems of Philosophy. Of course, these two problems could be treated under the headings of the second and the fourth main problems formulated above²¹.

By formulating these problems, we have now delineated a field of investigation for Philosophy that cannot be accessed by any special science or discipline but which has to be presupposed by all special sciences or disciplines (together with their own foundational concepts). In accordance with our view of Theology also Theology cannot cover this field of philosophical investigation (Philosophy also cannot cover that of Theological investigation). Philosophy has its own incontestable field of investigation and therefore a right to existence as a science. (Notwithstanding the fact that Theology, Philosophy as well as each and every special science or discipline and inter-discipline^{21a} has its own field of investigation, none of them can work in isolation; each of them depends on interaction with the others (they borrow findings from the others because they need them for their own work - and treat them as assumptions in their own fields -

²¹ Philosophy can also be subdivided in other ways. See my article in *Beginsels en Metodes van Hoër Onderwys* (Van Schaik, 1949). See also sections III D and IV of this study.

^{21a} The term ‘inter-discipline’ refers to disciplines such as Philosophy of Science, Gnoseology (the study of knowledge) and Epistemology (Theory of Knowledge, Theory of Knowing). The fields of investigation of inter-disciplines are those problems that Theology, Philosophy and every special science or discipline – each in its own way – share, and which can only be adequately investigated through collaboration among all these disciplines. One could say that inter-disciplines intersect Theology, Philosophy and the special sciences or disciplines from top to bottom. (See among others my article on Christian scholarship in volume II of *O EN R.*)

because they are unable to discover and verify them in their own fields). We cannot discuss this problem any further in the present context.²²

c. Having delineated Philosophy's field of investigation, we can still pose the question whether Philosophy can indeed be seen as a science, in other words whether it bears the features of a genuine scientific discipline. The answer to this question of course depends on what is understood by the term 'science' ²³. In my opinion, science can be distinguished from, on the one hand, pre-scientific knowledge (world- and life-view), and on the other, from – for example – art, economy, law, politics, morality, worship, education, history, technique, and so forth. Science can be defined as: that form of knowledge (knowledge as such) that has been optimally, technically and methodically systematised (in the process revealing coherences) and as far as possible been technically and methodically verified (by rendering founded and corroborated) knowledge²⁴.

i. Philosophy is (just like any other special²⁵ science or discipline) concerned with forming knowledge as knowledge in the most accountable and responsible manner. Some critics are of course sceptic about this thesis.

The reason for this can be found in the fact that in the course of the history of Philosophy we encounter phenomena such as mysticism, mostly pantheistic mysticism (see for instance the work of Spinoza). We particularly encounter mysticism when a philosopher finds him/herself compelled to reflect on the problem of the Archê, the Absolute and All-sufficient, a deity or the divine. This is understandable in view of the close relationship between Philosophy and the philosopher's pre-scientific world- and life-view. (cosmoscope). Note however that the philosopher remains concerned with accountably and responsibly discovering knowledge as knowledge rather than with mysticism as such, in other words, rather than with 'emotional unity' and 'becoming part' of 'the divine' or the Archê. Practising religious mysticism cannot be construed as doing Philosophy. Philosophy as mysticism is irrelevant in our case because we confine the task and field of Philosophy to investigation of the (created) cosmos as cosmos (in its totality and concomitant radical diversity). Philosophy is concerned with discovering knowledge as knowledge.

²² See footnote 7.

²³ See footnote 7.

²⁴ See footnote 7.

²⁵ Theology, Philosophy, every special science or discipline as well as all inter-sciences or intermediate disciplines can all be seen as 'special sciences'.

Philosophical systems are also often speculative. Speculation²⁶ enters the scene when, due to insufficient grounds or data, a person's intellectual imagination begins to dictate the construction of a system or framework. Of course, no science or discipline can do without scholarly imagination but imagination should never dominate. Speculative systems also work with knowledge as knowledge, and philosophers involved in such systems are also convinced about the validity or truth of their systems (cf. Leibniz's Monadology or Hegel's idealistic-dialectical philosophy). We have to be mindful of the fact that the insufficient evidence or data on which speculative systems are built cohere with certain pre-scientific presuppositions. The point is, however, that these systems present themselves as knowledge and not as products of fantasy. We are opposed to speculation, in other words to all forms of Metaphysics in doing Philosophy, because of our distinctions between God and cosmos, world- and life-view and science / scholarship, between Theology and Philosophy (and based on the relationships between them). Our Philosophy, therefore, is not speculative metaphysics.

Because of the speculative nature (guided by intellectual imagination) of some other philosophical systems, and also because of the particular language used for philosophical expositions, these systems or constructions can appear aesthetically pleasing to the eye and ear, in the same way as a work of art. But despite this inclination towards the artful (in which case aesthetic imagination has taken the dominant role), these efforts also essentially centre on knowledge as knowledge, on philosophical truth, on finding answers to philosophical problems.

Philosophy is concerned with accountable and responsible discovery of knowledge as knowledge, and with compliance with epistemological norms. This is why every philosophical system remains open to logical and material criticism. One sees this in the work of Plato and Aristotle, Thomas, Hume and Kant, Hegel, Heidegger and Dooyeweerd. All of these philosophers attempted to present something which is clearly more substantial than a pre-scientific world- and life-view.

ii. Like all scientists / scholars, philosophers strive at understanding, describing, explaining and assessing the knowable in their field of investigation. To achieve this aim, the philosopher should discover the various coherences (relationships, links, and intertwinements) of the knowable (*in casu* of the radical diversity, the primordial idions,

²⁶ See footnote 7 as well as my article in *Standpunte*, II, 3, II, 4 and III, 1.

and the foundational concepts). All of these actions contribute towards producing a systematic (i.e. revealing coherences) science - *in casu Philosophy*²⁷.

iii. Like all scientists / scholars, philosophers verify (ground and prove) their discoveries and findings, and present them (according to their particular presuppositions and insights) to the scholarly community as valid (true, correct). A philosopher *grounds* his findings by appealing to what he 'sees', 'perceives', discovers (forms of direct verification); this often takes the form of an appeal to self-evidence exuded by something knowable that has been intuitively discovered or perceived. A philosopher also *proves* the validity of his findings by discussing the logical consequences of his deductions (a form of indirect verification). Furthermore, Philosophy acquires its critical character by complying with this demand to verify (ground and prove) its findings.

iv. Philosophers also employ technical methods (like all other scientists in their respective disciplines). Among these are technical methods²⁸ used by all scientists, such as deduction and induction as well as analysis and synthesis; but they also use technical methods peculiar to Philosophy, such as the transcendental-analytical, the phenomenological (diafanerotic²⁹ i.e. sounding the essences or beings of phenomena) and existential-analytical methods. Since Philosophy focuses mainly on primordial idions (the mutually irreducible radical diversity), it stands to reason that intuition as a method (in other words, immediate insight into what presents itself as self-evident) will play an important but complicated role. Philosophy cannot be practised in the absence of technical methods pertaining to forming knowledge as knowledge, to discovering the relevant coherences, and to verification (providing ground and proof).

v. Like all other sciences or disciplines, doing Philosophy also demands that the technical-methodical forming of knowledge, systematising (revealing of coherences) and verification should occur 'as far as possible', in other words as far as its particular field of investigation demands and allows it. In this process, the scientist / scholar (in this case, the philosopher) should be critically mindful of the fact that doing science (in this case,

²⁷ This applies also to Existentialism as a Philosophy despite its adversity to rational (or rather rationalistic) systems. Its distinctions between (*inter alia*) existence, situation, design, choice, dare, being on-the-way to, time, anxiety, death, responsibility, freedom and so on all cohere and form a 'dynamic' (dare I say an 'irrational') system. This explains why the works of Existentialists are so evidently systematic.

²⁸ Regarding method, see my *B en M* as well as *Outlines of a Deontology of Scientific Method* (in the Festschrift – H Dooyeweerd: *Philosophy and Christianity* (J H Kok, Kampen 1965) – also part of *O en R volume II*; henceforth ODSM.

²⁹ Regarding the *diafanerotic method*, see my article on ethic in *O en R*, vol. I.

Philosophy) depends on pre-scientific insights and convictions as well as on relevant discoveries and findings of other sciences / disciplines necessary for inquiry in his or her own field but cannot be verified there³⁰. Some philosophers speculatively interpret the expression ‘as far as possible’ either too narrowly or too broadly. They either transcend the boundaries drawn by the field of investigation, or they set the boundaries too narrowly (as for instance in existentialist philosophy and in linguistic analysis). We also find – *mutatis mutandis* - such tendencies among theologians, scholars in special disciplines and inter-disciplinary scholars. These mistakes do not annul the right to exist of science and scholarship (including Philosophy). Scientific practice can produce either valid or invalid knowledge, just as a person’s morals can be either ethically good or bad. Invalid or bad science or scholarship should be contested, however.

vi. The above demonstrates that Philosophy shares the characteristics of genuine science and scholarship, and can therefore be regarded as a genuine and proper science. It might be different from other sciences such as Mathematics, Biology, Psychology, to mention only a few, and also from Theology (much in the same way that painting can be regarded as a different form of art from music, literature, sculpture and so on), but this does not detract from Philosophy’s explicit scientific character.

d. The development of a wide array of philosophical points of view, tendencies, movements and schools of thought can be mainly ascribed to the existence of widely differing pre-scientific starting points (world- and life-views, including religious persuasions) and presuppositions. Calvinistic Philosophy is only one of this plethora of Philosophies. It also includes a number of nuances or approaches, and one of these is the Philosophy of the Creation Idea.

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³⁰ See footnote 7.

II. CALVINISTIC PHILOSOPHY³¹

A. The name ‘Calvinistic Philosophy’

I assume the reader to be familiar with Calvinism and what it entails³². It is another question, however, whether the name ‘Calvinistic Philosophy’ is appropriate or suitable for the Philosophy that I propound here. This name incorrectly suggests that Calvin (who incidentally was no philosopher) has been accepted as its leading light, and that this form of Philosophy is nothing but theologised Philosophy, in view of Calvin having been a theologian. On top of this, Calvin entertained, on the one hand – partially because of scholastic influences – certain convictions (for example about the relationship between body and soul) that Calvinistic philosophers no longer accept, and on the other hand, Calvinistic philosophers today entertain convictions that we would not find in Calvin’s work. The reason for this is that Calvinism has also enjoyed historical continuance and has from time to time arrived at new insights. Dooyeweerd (along with Vollenhoven), the master builder of Calvinistic Philosophy, viz. the *The Philosophy of the Cosmopolitan Idea*, does not want this Philosophy to be labelled as ‘Calvinistic’; he prefers the name ‘Christian Philosophy’. All of us Calvinistic Philosophers would gladly concede that our Philosophy wishes to be nothing more or less than only *Christian* Philosophy. There are, of course, also other philosophical approaches that also lay claim to the name ‘Christian’. Roman Catholic philosophers³³, for instance, also claim that they are practising *Christian* Philosophy³⁴. If these are all known as exclusively *Christian* Philosophy, how are we going to terminologically distinguish between them? Names are linguistically distinguishing signs; to be able to distinguish between approaches, each

³¹ This subsection II *Calvinistic Philosophy* is a partially revised version of a paper entitled *Fundamentele Beginsels van die huidige Calvinistiese Wysbegeerte* presented at the SA *Wysgerige Kongres* in 1953.

³² See my article on Calvinism in *O EN R*, vol. I.

³³ According to the criterion of *norma negativa* (see my article on *Christelike Wetenskap* in *O EN R*, vol. II), all forms of Catholic Philosophy can be regarded as Christian. Mandonnet and Brehier, among others, reject, whilst Gilson, Maritain and Blondel, among others, defend ‘Christian Philosophy’ according to the criterion of *norma positiva*.

³⁴ The fact that Roman Catholic (Christian) and Calvinistic (Christian) Philosophies depart from different sets of convictions is beyond dispute. I only need to mention the doctrine of participation, the doctrine of grace and nature, and the doctrine of autonomous reason in Roman Catholicism, doctrines that have been rejected by Calvinism. See my article on *Christelike Wetenskap* in *O EN R volume II*.

should have its own distinctive name. One approach already mentioned above bears the name Roman Catholic Philosophy. Which name should we then select for our own approach, since we have already concluded that the name ‘Calvinistic Philosophy’ would not be entirely suitable or appropriate? ‘Reformed Philosophy’? The name ‘Reformed’ has already been reserved for church and Theology. ‘Protestant Philosophy’? There are already other ‘Protestant’ approaches extant, apart from the Calvinistic approach. ‘Reformational Philosophy’? There are other ‘reformational’ approaches apart from the Calvinistic, and besides, we wish our approach to be also ‘formational’ in the sense that we not only wish to reform that which has gone awry, but also to positively build in our own right. ‘Scriptural Philosophy’? While our Philosophy indeed takes cognisance of the fundamental light of God’s Word in its investigations, it is not restricted to consideration of this light only; its field of investigation is the cosmos (as totality and coherent diversity) itself. In common philosophical parlance, our Philosophy (together with that of Dooyeweerd) has become known as ‘Calvinistic Philosophy’. The name has become standard because of frequent colloquial use. We therefore seem to have no choice but to continue calling it ‘Calvinistic Philosophy’. Having said that, we realise that we would frequently be obliged to explain what exactly we mean by that name, and that our approach wishes to be nothing more or less than a *Christian* Philosophy. There are also other reasons why our Philosophy tends to be referred to as ‘Calvinistic’. One of these is the fact that Calvin emphasised two fundamental Biblical truths (that are also of paramount significance to and for our own approach to Philosophy) that we are compelled to accept, not because of having been formulated by Calvin but because they are truths according to the Word of God. The first of these is that the Word of God casts light on everything that exists; it is (also in the case of doing Philosophy) a ‘lamp for my foot and a light on my path’³⁵. This truth has been labelled the ‘formal principle of Calvinism’. The second truth is that God is the absolute Sovereign of his total creation (for from Him and through Him and to Him are all things). This truth has become known as the ‘material principle of Calvinism’. Of all the Reformers, Calvin succeeded in formulating and working with these two principles in the clearest, most consistent, penetrative and harmonious manner. They are truths because the Word of God presents itself autopistically (credible in itself) as the revealed Word of God Himself, and because

³⁵ According to the Calvinist, the Word of God is a revelation from and by God that has divine authority. Rome includes in its view of revelation also the inherited witnessing of the ‘saints’, and attributes to the Pope infallible authority of explanation of the revelations (when he speaks *ex cathedra*).

this Word witnesses to the fact that ‘to Him are all things’, that everything belongs to Him, and that He is the Sovereign over all that He has created³⁶. All Calvinistic philosophers are mindful of these truths. [\[Back to Contents\]](#)

B. *The common foundation of all the nuances of Calvinistic Philosophy*

1. ***Calvinistic Philosophy***

a. It is possible to distinguish various nuances or emphases within Calvinistic Philosophy, to the same extent that it is possible to distinguish between nuances within each of, for instance, Kantian, Roman Catholic, Positivistic and Existentialist Philosophy. We would indeed have been amazed if the situation had been otherwise. Differences in aptitude, training, influence from persons with other ideas and convictions - some even from the distant past, but also in terms of the current spirit of the times amongst others because of common problems confronting all philosophers - contribute to different nuances. Differences in how problems are seen or formulated, in the choice and emphasis of principles, also the difficult problems that philosophers are generally confronted with, result in different approaches. Also the dynamics of the Calvinistic life- and world-view and the pioneering character of this youthful form of Philosophy as well as the sinful ‘nature’ that Calvinistic philosophers share with all other people (and so on) - all of these contribute to the creation of different approaches and nuances. This state of affairs calls the Calvinistic philosopher to consistent and strict self-criticism, to an exchange of thoughts and ideas, and to reformation of the Calvinistic Philosophy that we share. It is not the *ipse dixit* of a master that binds Calvinistic philosophers together, and therefore not any school of Philosophy, but rather a. their shared (pre-scientific) life- and world-view in which this form of Philosophy historically and fundamentally finds its origins;³⁷ b. their conviction that the fundamental truths of the Word of God regarding Himself and his relationship with all things are of fundamental or ‘principal’ significance for understanding the field of philosophical investigation, and c. their shared field of philosophical investigation, namely, the cosmos as a totality and the concomitant radical diversity.

b. The Holy Word of God is of course no scientific (and therefore also no philosophical) textbook, and it does not provide us with scientific (and therefore also not philosophical) terms and formulae; it only provides us with pre-scientific revelation.

³⁶ See footnote 32.

³⁷ In the same way that it is *mutatis mutandis* the case in all other forms of Philosophy.

Correctly understood, God's Word is a source of knowledge that casts its light also on the field of philosophical investigation. This light has the effect of 'changing almost the entire formulation of the problem as well as the answer' (Vollenhoven). Adherence to the Word of God prevents one in principle from impregnating Philosophy with subjective and arbitrary religious convictions. The light of the Scriptures also provides the philosopher with relevant data that would not be available or settled elsewhere.³⁸ Because of its trans-cosmic origins (being the revelation of God), the Holy Scriptures offer us the possibility of a view of cosmic totality, something that is not possible from an internal-cosmic vantage point^{38a}. The Word of God provides Philosophy with a religious, or rather a *te-al*³⁹ *a priori*, in other words fundamental ontic principles regarding the relationship between God and cosmos. These fundamentals serve as regulative principles that guide the philosopher in both positive and negative manners (by analogy, in the same way that philosophical foundational concepts guide special science inquiries). In my opinion, philosophers should formulate these principles in collaboration with theologians (to the extent that it can be done within the confines of scientific inquiry). We assume that the light shining from God's Word is what helps us see the cosmos the way it really and truly is.

c. Calvinistic Philosophy strives at being a radically Christian Philosophy. It is, however, no *religion* (in the restricted sense of worship). We encounter religion in the restricted sense when believers (in this case, Christians) congregate, for instance during family prayers or in the inner room, turn directly to God; in other words praise, glorify, thank Him and pray to Him, spread his Word or listen to it, partake in the sacraments, evangelise, do missionary work, and so on. We should be careful not to understand *Christian Philosophy* to mean Christian (ecclesiastic) *religious Philosophy*. In this instance, we need to understand that what is Christian in Christian Philosophy is not Philosophy, and what is Philosophy in Christian Philosophy is not Christian (liturgical worship). Professing a creed in the presence of a congregation is certainly not a philosophical argument, just as philosophical inquiry into space and time cannot be construed as a sacramental act. However, God can also be served in a wider sense in contradistinction to religion in the restricted sense, i.e. as 'worship', that we have

³⁸ See footnote 7.

^{38a} See my *B en M*. 'Totality' here refers to 'primary totality'. Also see article 3 in *O EN R volume II*.

³⁹ See with respect to 'religious' the following paragraph. I used the term 'te-al', which expresses the relationship of God with the total cosmos, for the first time in my thesis *Das Gewissen* (Cohen, Bonn, 1925). Also see section III.c.13.c of this study.

discussed so far. We refer to the wider service of God as ‘religion’⁴⁰. A person can serve God by performing cultural acts (such as doing science, including Philosophy). God has given potential in nature (created cosmos) to be formed into culture; He has given the human being the ability to form culture (perform cultural acts). All of this (potential, and all human abilities) are subject to his creational order. He has also mandated human beings to bring about culture solely to his glory and honour, by executing (or attaining) the final destination (or purpose) of both the cosmos and human beings. In this wider sense, everything that is done or not done by human beings can be regarded as religion (i.e. either obedient or disobedient to God). Religion as this wider (better: extended) service of God also embraces worship, i.e. religion in the narrower sense. Calvinistic Philosophy strives to be radically Christian in the *religious* sense, in other words as an extensive or comprehensive serving of God, as a response to the Divine calling according to the revelation of God in his Word. In this sense, Calvinistic Philosophy can at the same time be both rigorous science and profoundly Christian⁴¹.

d. Its Christian character does not make Calvinistic Philosophy a form of Theology. In fact, it does not at all wish to be a form of Theology, and condemns all philosophising about God (the Archê, the Absolute, the All-sufficient). Theology (*in casu* Christian Theology) has the task and duty, according to Calvinists, of scientifically inquiring into God’s revelation of Himself and of the relationship between Himself and all other things (within the indicated boundaries). A Calvinistic philosopher limits his or her field of inquiry to the cosmos only (as totality and coherent radical diversity). He / she does not wish to be a theologian, and does not wish to fulfil the role of a theologian. On the other hand, however, Philosophy cannot be practised in isolation from Theology and the other scientific subjects and inter-disciplines because everything knowable coheres with everything else. Interchange between disciplines (borrowing and lending of findings and conclusions that one discipline needs from another while investigating its own field of inquiry) is a necessary and – *strictu sensu* – unavoidable requirement. In view of this, the Calvinistic philosopher will in the course of his dialogue with the Reformed theologian take cognisance of what the latter can offer in his field that the philosopher

⁴⁰ Calvinists need this distinction. Whereas Dooyeweerd distinguishes between religion and faith (the pisteutic function), and S P van der Walt between worship and public worship or religious rites, I prefer to distinguish between religion and (liturgical) worship (religion in its broader sense as opposed to religion in its narrower sense).

⁴¹ Heidegger (*Einleitung in die Metaphysik*) contends that Christian Philosophy must be something like *ein hölzernes Eisen, eine Unmöglichkeit*. In my opinion, Christian (i.e. religion in the narrower meaning) Philosophy must indeed be something like a wooden iron, but not Christian (i.e. religion in the wider meaning) Philosophy.

might find important or relevant⁴². This does not change Philosophy into Theology, in the same way that interaction between Philosophy and a special science would not make the latter a form of Philosophy. In fact, it is the philosopher who does not reckon with Theology; but wishes to philosophise about God (the Archê, the Absolute, the All-sufficient) Himself, or who absolutises something from the cosmos, who risks playing theologian or changing Philosophy into a form of Theology⁴³. [\[Back to Contents\]](#)

2. *The nuances*

We shall merely mention the different nuances, and refrain from critical comments.

- a. Calvinistic Philosophy (and together with it responsible insight into its necessity) originated only by the end of the 19th century. The fact that it was virtually impossible to refer to Calvinistic Philosophy in the period between the Reformation and the end of the 19th century is a remarkable state of affairs for which we yet have to discover the reasons. Neither Calvin nor A Kuyper (Sr.) attempted to construct a philosophical system but provided important foundations for such a system. Especially, Kuyper's reformational vision served as an important stimulus since the end of the 19th century for the founding and construction of a Calvinistic Philosophy.



⁴² According to the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea (about which more will be said later), Theology is also a special science or discipline that should, like all other special sciences / disciplines, require for its theoretical (scientific) work guidance from Philosophy. I do not share this 'pan-philosophical' tendency (the sphere-sovereignty of each discipline should be respected). Every discipline does not only have its own field of inquiry, but also – in addition to those shared with others – its own theoretical (scientific) way of obtaining knowledge, of knowing, of reflection and thought-problems. (See footnote 21.) Theology is no special science / discipline, in my opinion. Theology must deal with the deepest, highest and final problems, viz. God's revelation of Himself and his relationship with all things. Philosophy depends on Theology for its ground-ideas (in the same way that the special sciences or disciplines depend on Philosophy for their fundamental concepts). Theology, on the other hand, depends on Philosophy and the special sciences or disciplines in its reflection on problems regarding the cosmos (created by God) (– in the same way that Philosophy depends on the results of special science inquiries). Among the sciences or disciplines, Theology may be regarded as the *prima inter pares* (the first among equals). Theology should be restored to its rightful place in our Calvinistic Philosophy.

The Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea wishes to discover its religious convictions in a naïve exegesis of God's Word. All sciences / disciplines should, with respect to their pre-scientific convictions, depart from their faith in God's Word Revelation. However, as soon as philosophers begin using Biblical truths scientifically, they require collaboration from a theologian with his or her scientific exegesis of God's Word; otherwise, they begin *nolens volens* playing the role of theologian. Dooyeweerd's Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea contains in its religious exposition a great deal of Theology that specifically calls for a conversation with theologians.

⁴³ This is the case with every “-ism” which strives to absolutise the in-self-sufficient cosmos or something in the cosmos (attempts to theoretically idolise it).

b. We find the first efforts at constructing a Calvinistic Philosophy in some of the publications of H Bavinck (theologian and philosopher)⁴⁴. His entire system was constructed on the root principle of God's revelation and that all of creation was based on revelation. This is why this Philosophy has become known as the *Philosophy of the Revelation Idea*.

Bavinck discusses problems such as: The Logos; Logos and revelation; revelation as key to reality; God as *veritas prima*; truth and reality; ontic, logical and ethical truth; the triad: God, the human being and the world (which pervades all of his philosophy); principle; principle and fact; the three principia: *principium essendi*, *principium cognoscendi internum* and *principium cognoscendi externum*; being and being so and so; ideal and reality; matter and spirit; spirit and nature; nature and culture; idea and law; substances, powers and law; the human being as macro cosmos and as micro theos; the human being as image of God; spirit, soul and body; consciousness; self-consciousness; self-knowledge; freedom and dependence; sin and evil; knowledge; revelation as foundation of knowledge; truth and certainty; faith; faith and knowing; intuition; illumination; perception and reflection; pre-scientific knowledge and science; science; religion and science; religion and culture; science and revelation; the right to existence of Christian scholarship; the taxonomy of sciences (natural sciences, human sciences, Philosophy and Theology); unity and diversity in science; scientific methods; keen criticism of many philosophical approaches and schools with respect to all of the aforementioned problems.

V Hepp (theologian) contributed to several of the most important aspects of this Calvinistic Philosophy. To a certain extent we may also count the relevant publications of J Woltjer and W Geesinck as belonging to this nuance of Calvinistic Philosophy⁴⁵. It is striking to note that theologians were the main builders of this Philosophy. I personally lament the fact that this nuance of Calvinistic Philosophy has (as far as I know) become virtually extinct, because it offers (especially the revelation idea) valuable opportunities for further philosophical development, especially with respect to a Calvinistic view of

⁴⁴ See the thesis of S P van der Walt *Die Wysbegeerte van dr. Herman Bavinck* (Pro Rege-Pers, Potchefstroom, 1953) in which he refers to the multitude of relevant publications of Bavinck. Also see my articles in *KIDK II* and *III*.

⁴⁵ P Prins and H Steen (The Netherlands) as well as C Jaarsma (USA) borrowed from this Philosophy. F J M Potgieter (Stellenbosch) also linked up with this Philosophy in his thesis entitled *Die verhouding tussen die Teologie en die Filosofie by Calvyn* (Noord-Hollandse Uitgevers Maatschappij, Amsterdam, 1939). We also need to mention the name of the well-known theologian-philosopher C van Til of the USA who has been contributing in his own way to this Philosophy, and of whom we should take more cognisance in this country.

knowledge (Gnoseology). Nevertheless, this nuance served as a first orientation towards a Calvinistic Philosophy⁴⁶ and has provided impetus and inspiration, as evidenced by the appearance of other nuances of Calvinistic Philosophy.

c. A second and extraordinarily strong nuance of Calvinistic Philosophy came into existence and developed from the third decade of the 20th century onwards, namely the *Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea*. This is a rather fertile nuance. Many philosophical publications, several of them standard works, flowed from the pens of the many proponents of this nuance (both in the Netherlands and beyond its boundaries). It is not possible to mention the names of all these contributors⁴⁷. I shall restrict myself to mentioning only six names, i.e. the names mentioned in *Perspectief* (Festchrift to commemorate the 25th year of existence of the *Vereeniging voor Calvinistische Wijsbegeerte*, J H Kok, Kampen, 1961): the two master builders H Dooyeweerd and D H Th Vollenhoven, and then also S U Zuidema, J P A Mekkes, K J Popma and H van Riessen. I am sad that I cannot mention any more names here, but I would have no criterion regarding who to mention and who not. The Society that I mentioned above publishes an international journal, *Philosophia Reformata*⁴⁸, which has now reached its 33rd volume. What strikes me as interesting is that the collaborators in the *Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea* are not only philosophers, but also (a few) theologians and especially scholars in several special sciences (among others, natural scientists). What I find refreshing here is that – I am now restricting myself to the aforementioned six persons – the co-constructors of this Philosophy do not necessarily agree with one another about everything; they differ even on formulations of some fundamental problems. I say ‘refreshing’ because there is no trace of school-forming around Dooyeweerd and Vollenhoven. Most of them approach matters independently and responsibly; in my opinion, the time has come for a more public struggle about the differences of opinion.

Although Vollenhoven has contributed substantially to the Systematics of Philosophy, his main contributions – keen, intensive, extensive, penetrative and critical - can be found in the field of the History of Philosophy⁴⁹ in accordance with his valuable and well-known

⁴⁶ See my articles in *KIDK*, II and III.

⁴⁷ See footnotes 52 and 56.

⁴⁸ Edited by H Dooyeweerd (The Netherlands), H E Runner (USA), H G Stoker (RSA), C van Til (USA), A von Varga (Hungary) and D H Th Vollenhoven (The Netherlands).

⁴⁹ See particularly his *Geschiedenis der Wijsbegeerte* (First Volume: *Grieksche Wijsbegeerte*; Wever: Franeker, 1950). We should also mention his *Het Calvinisme en de Reformatie van de Wijsbegeerte* (Paris, Amsterdam, 1933), in which he discusses, among others, the Patristic and

problem-historical method. his findings and conclusions may be controversial in some respects, but there can be no doubt as to the geniality and originality of his approach, his Scriptural-critical approach, and the valuable new distinctions that he has made. Dooyeweerd is, however, the true systematic builder of the *Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea*. I fully support the remark of Mr G E Langemeyer, jurist, who declared himself to be ‘of totally different outlook on life and political orientation than Dooyeweerd’, but that Dooyeweerd ‘should be regarded as the most original philosopher that The Netherlands has ever produced, including Spinoza’⁵⁰. I have to acknowledge with gratitude that I have learned much from Dooyeweerd and Vollenhoven and other exponents of the *Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea*. (I have to say the same with respect to Bavinck.)

As far as this nuance of Calvinistic Philosophy is concerned, we limit ourselves to the magisterial work of Dooyeweerd; we summarize the main or fundamental themes of this Philosophy according to distinctions that Dooyeweerd himself made in his four-volume publication (translated into English⁵¹ and revised) entitled: *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought* (H J Paris, Amsterdam, 1953-1958), I, p. 541/2. I follow a sequence that is partly my own. Dooyeweerd’s keen and penetrating criticism of numerous other philosophers through the ages will not be mentioned separately, and also not his decisive struggle against all forms of synthetic philosophy (i.e. philosophy attempting to establish itself on two roots, viz. a Christian as well as a non-Christian). Dooyeweerd stated by way of introduction that all the ‘themata’ mutually cohere and have to be investigated in the light of his transcendental ground idea (in other words, his law or cosmo-nomic idea).

1. *The transcendental criticism of philosophic thought implying the investigation of religious ground-motives which determine the contents of the transcendental ground-ideas.*

He discusses the following under this heading: Being (the Archê, God, Creator, sovereign Law-giver) and meaning (the insufficient being of creation under the law of God); the law or cosmo-nomic idea as the ground-idea of Philosophy. Christ (according to his human nature), as Archimedes point, in Whom all the totality of creation is concentrated. The Biblical religious ground-motive of creation, fall into sin and redemption. The human being and the cosmic (especially modal) coherent diversity; both as subject to the regulated order of God. The human

Mediaeval Philosophies.

⁵⁰ Quoted by K J Popma in ‘Regelrecht’, Nov. 1965, p. 331.

⁵¹ The original main work is *De Wijsbegeerte der Wetssidee* I, II and III (Paris, Amsterdam, 1935-1936).

being in his or her religious centre (his or her heart oriented toward the Archê and transcending time and cosmic diversity, whereas the cosmos is subject to cosmic time). The human being as subjective totality and as epicentre of cosmic diversity. Religion. Cosmic time. The three transcendental ground-problems; the trinity of the transcendental ground-idea. Subject and law. Naïve experience; subject and object. Theoretical thought: *Gegenstand*. Necessity of criticising the presuppositions of one's own Philosophy as well as those of others; necessity of dialogue with others. Life- and world-view and Philosophy. Philosophy and the other special sciences or disciplines (one of which, according to the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea, is Theology).

2. *The investigation directed toward the analysis of the modal aspects of temporal reality in order to discover their functional structure. This is the general theory of the modal aspects and their proper law-spheres.* (The theory of the law-spheres.) The mutually irreducible diversity of the law-spheres. The irreducible meaning kernel / core of a law-sphere; sphere sovereignty. The sequence of the law-spheres. Cosmic time and functional times. Anticipations and retrocipations; sphere-universality; restriction and disclosure. Law- and meaning- (subject-) side; subject-object relationship; the individuality problem. Antinomies and the cosmic *principium exclusae antinomiae*. Dooyeweerd illustrates his views by analysing several of the law-spheres; we have to draw attention to his penetrating analysis of the historical law-sphere.

3. *The theory of knowledge with respect to naïve experience, the special sciences, and philosophy, or the transcendental self-reflection on the universally valid conditions of naïve experience and of the theoretical analysis and synthesis of modal meaning, in the light of the transcendental ground-Idea.* The following (among others) fall under this heading. Intermodal systasis and theoretical synthesis; meaning-systasis, logical synthesis and intermodal synthesis. Naïve experience and theoretical *Gegenstand*. Intuition and cosmic time. The structural horizon of human experience and of the created 'earthly reality'; the apriori's of this; the openness of the theory of law-spheres; the horizon of individuality structures. Dependence of our knowledge of the cosmos on self-knowledge and our knowledge of God. Standing in Truth as freedom. Relationship between faith and reason. The perspectival (relational) structure of truth.

4. *The examination directed towards the data of naïve experience in order to investigate the typical structures of individuality of temporal reality, and their mutual interwinements.* Individuality structures and naïve experience. The structures of matter, plant, animal and the human being. Subject-object relationship in the individuality structure of reality. The individuality structures of human society. The basic problem. The individuality structure of a family. That of the state. That of the church as institute. That of voluntary association. Inter-individual and inter-communal relationships. Enkapsis or forms of intertwinement among individuality structures in matter, plant, animal and human being. Different types of enkapsis. The enkaptic structural unity of matter, plant and animal. The body. The human being and his or her place in temporary reality.

5. *The investigation of the structural unity of human existence within cosmic time, in the light of the transcendental Idea of human selfhood; this is the theme of philosophical anthropology. It can only be developed on the basis of all former themes of investigation.* Dooyeweerd envisaged writing an encompassing work on Anthropology. In the meantime, he discussed all the important problems relating to Anthropology in his numerous publications. In them, he discusses the human being in his or her relationship to God (the Archè) and to cosmic diversity, the religious centre of the human being, the human being as body, the human being's vocation in this temporary world, his/her relationship with Christ, the fall into sin, redemption, and so on.

This is of course not an exhaustive overview of all the themes. We limited ourselves to the themes discussed in his main publication (translated into English), and insofar as they reflect his own problems and views. In this important publication, Dooyeweerd discusses exhaustively and with extraordinary and acute criticism the views of a great many philosophers through the ages with respect to the problems treated by him. In this process, he discusses with extraordinary acuity and penetration all kinds of 'immanence philosophies', among them Philosophy that accepts as starting point the self-sufficiency of philosophical thought itself and the autonomy of human reason. In its place, he proposes a Biblical transcendence-philosophy (namely the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea) that respects the self-insufficiency of human thought and resultantly rejects the notion of the autonomy of reason; in his or her (subjectedness to the law of God) religious existence, the human being transcends the cosmic diversity and time (and with it, also philosophical reflection). Although God and his Christ are transcendent to the totality of created reality, Christ in his human form is the concentration point of the cosmos, and the human heart is directed in its religious centre towards God (or apostatically towards a false god or idol). He also sharply and with perspicacity (in the case of relevant problems) criticises the syncretism (to which he refers as: synthesis) of Philosophies (among others, and for instance that of Thomism) that depart at the same time from both Christian and non-Christian principles. He also keenly reveals the impossibility of a so-called 'neutral' Philosophy. And finally, he strives at entering into meaningful conversations with philosophers who think differently with a view to laying bare in these discussions the pre-scientific ground-motives at the roots of each particular Philosophy⁵².

⁵² We especially should mention the *Vereeniging voor Calvinistische Wijsbegeerte*. It has been in existence since 1937. According to a report in 1968, it consisted of approximately 700 members (about 500 in the Netherlands, roughly 60 in South Africa, only about 40 in Canada, just about 40 in the USA, and the rest in Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Germany, France, Indonesia, Italy, Japan,

d. I call the third nuance of Calvinistic Philosophy the *Philosophy of the Creation Idea*. This is the direction that my own philosophical struggles have taken since the third decade of the 20th century⁵³. As I shall be treating this approach extensively in this treatise, I shall not give a summary of it here.

e. In his important dissertation entitled *Towards a Reformed Philosophy* (Wever, Franeker, 1952), W Young (USA)⁵⁴ pleads for an Augustinian-oriented Calvinistic logos-philosophy, and in the process links up with the work done by J Woltjer and C van Til (USA). This is a promising development, and we are awaiting further results. Prof Dr Yellema⁵⁵ (USA) made a plea for a Calvinistic Philosophy that departed from the notion of 'the Christian Reformed Consciousness'.

f. And then there are many Calvinists (theologians, philosophers and special scientists) – both within The Netherlands and beyond its borders – who have made valuable contributions to Calvinistic Philosophy but which cannot be classified into any of the above nuances, or who take a position somewhere in between some of them, and therefore accept findings and conclusions emanating from more than one of these nuances⁵⁶.

Korea, the Dutch Antilles, Sierra Leone, Venezuela and Switzerland). Also Philosophers propounding a different nuance of Calvinistic Philosophy are members; the majority of which are exponents of the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea, however. Also see footnote 56. Among these members can also be found a relatively large number of special science scholars who ground their disciplines in Calvinistic-philosophical foundations or principles. Apart from its international organ *Philosophia Reformata* (see the remark to which footnote 48 refers), the Association also publishes the journals *Mededelingen* and *Correspondentiebladen*. The Association is also responsible for establishing chairs in Philosophy at the Universities of Utrecht and Groningen (Prof Dr K J Popma) and Leiden and Delft (Prof Dr P J A Mekkes).

⁵³ See footnote 1.

⁵⁴ I have not seen any other publication of his after his (in my opinion) important dissertation.

⁵⁵ According to personal communications; also see *Festschrift-Yellema* (Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Mich. USA).

⁵⁶ It is impossible to give a complete list of all the Calvinists who have so far made contributions to Calvinistic Philosophy. To let the reader experience something of the vibrancy and international character of this young branch in the history of Philosophy, we will only mention the names of lecturers in (a) Philosophy and (b) Theology or a special science or discipline that also teach a sub-discipline of Philosophy – in which case we will indicate these sub-disciplines in parentheses. Theologians and special scientists who are not responsible for a philosophical discipline are not mentioned, even if they were somehow involved in their theological and special science inquiries with Calvinistic Philosophy. Even with these limitations it would be impossible to be exhaustive. I apologise to those lecturers whose names should have appeared in the list but have been overlooked. I have compiled the list as carefully as possible but this does not exclude the possibility that there might have been a misunderstanding here and there, especially when philosophical disciplines are mentioned. The various persons represent different nuances of Calvinistic Philosophy but most of them are adherents of the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea. Not all the names are equally important; we merely wish to show how Calvinistic Philosophy is being practised world-wide.

There are no traces of school-forming in all of these nuances. Calvinistic Philosophers are not bound by the *ipse dixit* of a master, but only by their common or shared life- and world-view, their shared faith in the importance of the light shed by the Word of God in doing Philosophy, by their shared philosophical field of inquiry, religious ground-motive and fundamentals (principles). They are also critical of each other. The Philosophy of the Revelation Idea has been criticised for the Thomistic, scholastic and Idealistic ideas that it harbours; the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea (especially Dooyeweerd) has been taken to task for the neo-Kantian influences that it entertains; the Philosophy of the

The Free University of Amsterdam: Prof Dr A W Begemann; Prof Dr Th de Boer; Prof Dr G de Roos (philosophical foundations of economics); emeritus Prof Dr H Dooyeweerd; Prof Dr J H Hommes (Legal philosophy); Prof Dr C C Jonker (Philosophy of nature); Dr J Klapwijk; Prof Dr G E Meuleman (Philosophy of religion); Prof Dr D C Mulder (Philosophy of religion); Prof Dr P Mullender (Philosophy of Mathematics); Prof H R Rookmaker (Philosophy of Art); Prof Dr G Y Nieuwland (Philosophy of Mathematics); Prof Dr R Schippers (Ethics); Prof Dr M C Smit (Philosophy of History); Prof Dr J R van der Fliert (Philosophy of Geology); Prof Dr J van der Hoeven; Prof Dr S U Zuidema; Prof Dr H van Riessen; emeritus Prof Dr D H Th Vollenhoven; *Delft and Leiden*: Prof Dr J P A Mekkes. *Delft*: Prof De Haan (Philosophy of law); Prof Dr H J van der Maas (philosophical foundations of technique). Prof Dr G Bruins (philosophical foundations of technique). *Groningen and Utrecht*: Prof Dr K J Popma. *Groningen*: Prof W K van Dijk (philosophical-anthropological foundations of Psychiatry); Prof Dr P A Verburg (philosophy of language). *Kampen*: Prof Dr C Veenhof (Philosophy of Religion).

Australia: Dr E D Fackerell; Prof J A Schep (Victoria). *Germany*: Prof Dr Fred Klooster (Heidelberg); Prof Dr Alex von Varga (Munich). *England*: Dr P H Hughes (London); Dr E L H Taylor (Bradford). *France*: Dr Pierre C H Marcel (who has created a circle of collaborators). *Indonesia*: Prof D C Mulder (Djocja); Prof Dr Notohamidjojo (Universitas Kristen, Sataya Watj., Salatiga); Dr S J Roosjen (Salatiga); Prof Dr H I van der Laan (Fouralby College). *Japan*: Dr H A Smit (missionary lecturer). *Canada*: Prof Dr P A Schouls (Edmonton); Dr H Hart (Institute of Christian Studies, Toronto); Prof Dr W Kuyk (philosophical foundations of Mathematics, Montreal); Dr J Olthuis (Toronto); Prof Dr W Stanford Reid (Philosophy of History, Guelph, Ontario); Dr B Zylstra (Philosophy of State and Law, Toronto). *Austria*: Prof Dr J Bohatec (deceased). *U S A*: Roy Clouser (La Salle College, Philadelphia); Prof Dr A H de Graaff (Trinity College, Chicago); Prof Dr H Freeman (Rhode Island); Prof Dr R D Knudsen (Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia); Asst Prof N Lee (Shelton College, Cape May); Prof Dr E V Runner (Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Mich.); Prof Dr G C Seerveld (do.); Dr P C Schrottenboer (Calvin Seminary, Grand Rapids); Prof Dr T Grady Spires (Boston, Massachusetts); Prof Dr Henry Stob (Calvin Seminary, Grand Rapids)); Prof Dr J C van der Stelt ((Dordt College, Sioux Centre, Iowa); emeritus Prof Dr C van Til (Westminster Theological College, Philadelphia); Prof Dr W Young (Rhode Island); Prof Dr H van Zyl (Grand Rapids).

South Africa: Prof Dr J D G van der Merwe (Huguenot College, Wellington: Philosophical Anthropology); *PU for CHE*: Prof L J du Plessis (deceased)(Philosophy of Law and State); Prof Dr W J de Klerk (Interfaculty Philosophy); Prof Dr B Duvenage (Interfaculty Philosophy and Ethics); P G Snyman (Ethics of Journalism); Prof Dr H G Stoker; Prof Dr B C Strydom (Philosophy of Mathematics); Prof Dr H L Swanepoel (Philosophy of Law); Prof Dr J A L Taljaard; Drs N T van der Merwe; Prof Dr J D van der Vyver (Philosophy of Law); Prof Dr C P van der Walt (Philosophy of the State); Prof Dr S P van der Walt (Ethics); J J Venter. *RAU Johannesburg*: Prof Dr P G W du Plessis; Dr W P Esterhuyse. *University of Rhodes, Grahamstown*: Prof Dr H J Schutte (Philosophical foundations of Mathematics); *Stellenbosch University*: Dr J A Heyns (Ethics); Prof Dr F J M Potgieter (see footnotes 45 and 88); Dr H Rousseau; *U C of the North, Turfloop*: Dr P J Heiberg (Philosophy of Education). *UOFS, Bloemfontein*: Prof Dr P de Kock; Prof Dr H J Strauss (Philosophy of the State); Prof S I E van Tonder (Philosophy of Law); Prof E A Venter (deceased). *University of Port Elizabeth*: Prof Dr J Heidema (Philosophical foundations of

Creation Idea for the Schelerian-phenomenological influences that can be detected in it (in my publications); and the Platonic influences in the Augustinian-oriented Logos Philosophy. Justifiably or not; but let us leave it there. The common grounds that all Calvinistic philosophers share enable them to make true mutual contact, both in terms of what they agree about but also about what they differ. [\[Back to Contents\]](#)

Mathematics). I wish to add the name of Dr P J Meyer, although he is not a lecturer. I am gratefully surprised at the vitality of this young branch of Philosophy, and to see to what heights it has already risen. On the other hand, one notices that rather few departments of Philosophy in our country – particularly at Afrikaans universities – devote any attention to Calvinistic Philosophy. We do not expect them to agree with this approach (alongside for example, Existentialism and Linguistic Analysis), but they should have found it worthwhile to give Calvinistic Philosophy the attention it deserves.

3. The common aspects

3.a. Introductory remark

As already mentioned, the following seem to be traits / characteristics common to all the nuances of Calvinistic Philosophy: i. the pre-scientific Calvinistic life- and world-view – including religious faith) in which this Philosophy historically and fundamentally finds its origins; ii. The light cast by God's Scriptural Revelation on the cosmos through which we can 'see' the cosmos as it truly and really is (in its relationship and dependence on the Triune God); and iii. Their commonly shared field of inquiry (viz. the cosmos itself in its totality and its coherent diversity).

When we now speak of an '*a priori*', we do not understand this term the way it is for instance understood in Kantian epistemology but rather in the sense of an '*ontic a priori*', of 'principles of being' that are part and parcel of the cosmos as such. We find typically cosmic *a priori*'s in the cosmos. We do not discuss this point here any further. We limit ourselves to the 'te-al'⁵⁷ (including religious) *a priori* of the cosmos⁵⁸, i.e. those fundamental principles which reveal the relationship of the cosmos to God as well as its dependence on Him. The Calvinistic philosopher approaches his / her field of inquiry in terms of this te-al (and religious) ontic *a priori*; this *a priori* also fundamentally and broadly co-determines the construction of Calvinistic Philosophy. You may – if you wish – call this *a priori* a (pre-) supposition (or assumption) from which the Calvinistic philosopher departs⁵⁹, but he accepts them on the basis of keen and responsible criticism (analysis and grounding) and not arbitrarily. We only mention the most important of these te-al (and religious) ontic *a priori*'s.

We formulate the common aspects in our own way. [\[Back to Contents\]](#)

3.b. The te-al (or cosmological) *a priori*

- i. According to God's Scriptural Revelation, Triune God is the Archê, the Absolute and Absolutely All-sufficient, from Whom, through Whom and to Whom all 'things' are;

⁵⁷ See footnote 39

⁵⁸ I used to refer to 'religious *a priori*' of the cosmos and of a philosophical system. But this only applies insofar as the human being (in his or her relationship with God and cosmos) is involved with it. I now prefer the term 'te-al ontic *a priori*' to refer to the cosmos and its dependence on God. See footnote 39.

⁵⁹ In the same manner that other philosophers *mutatis mutandis* necessarily depart from such pre-scientific (pre-) suppositions.

the absolute Sovereign over all that exists. He created the cosmos⁶⁰ out of love, kindness, wisdom and omnipotence, and determined it through his cosmic order. He takes care of it, governs it, and guides it to its final destination in accordance with his council. The cosmos, being in itself insufficient, law-subjected and possessing a unique creaturely nature and meaning⁶¹, points beyond itself to its Origin, to God. This pointing beyond itself to God is a te-al ontic *a priori* of the cosmos and everything in it. The Calvinistic philosopher investigates the cosmos as cosmos, and will (unlike other philosophers) refrain from elevating anything in the cosmos to the level of self-reliance / autonomy⁶², thereby making it absolute. His approach is to investigate the cosmos in its entirety and in its coherent radical diversity in the light of the background perspective of the radical difference between God and cosmos, as well as of the relationship between God and cosmos. He follows this approach because nothing of God (including his omnipresence, immanence and presence) is part of creation (creaturely), and nothing in the cosmos is identical with God. This is not a dualism but rather recognition of a duality, in terms of which God alone is absolute and all sufficient, whereas the cosmos is dependent on God for everything, is ‘in-self-sufficient’, created and subject to God’s cosmic order. Furthermore, in terms of which God (from, through and to Whom all ‘things’ are) is the trans-cosmic centre of the cosmos as a totality and coherent diversity. We say ‘trans-cosmic’ because God is God, radically different from the cosmos. Theology might attempt to understand the cosmos by approaching it *from* the perspective of its theo-centricity; by contrast, the Calvinistic philosopher investigates the cosmos as cosmos *in* its theo-centricity (in its theo-centric grounded-ness).

ii. We discover in the cosmos relative diversity / variety on the basis of which the cosmos can be understood and explained, also with respect to the origins of variations. But is there also a radical (mutually irreducible) diversity which, as such, cannot be understood or explained in terms of the cosmos itself? This is denied by Materialists: they believe that everything consists of matter, and is therefore explainable and understandable on

⁶⁰ See footnote 13

⁶¹ The cosmos indeed possesses no independence *vis-a-vis* God, but does possess a certain degree of in-self-sufficient identity stance.

⁶² See footnote 61. The Calvinistic philosopher does not deny the uniqueness and particular nature of the cosmos or of something belonging to the cosmos, but rejects the notion of their autonomy (for example, that of ‘nature’, of ‘facts’, of ‘thought’, and so on) in terms of which something gains independence from God and is seen as self-reliant and therefore denying its in-self-sufficiency.

^{62a} Materialism reduces the total radical diversity to types of material functions, thereby levelling the differences between them.

the basis of matter itself^{62a}. This is, *mutatis mutandis*, the view of many other ‘-isms’. God’s Word reveals to us, however, that the cosmos consists of a radical diversity that finds its origins in God himself, and did not originate in and through the cosmos. This diversity can therefore not be explained and understood in terms of the cosmos itself. The divine origin of this radical diversity is also a te-al ontic *a priori* of the cosmos. The Calvinistic philosopher searches for this radical diversity, respects it and will not (unlike many other philosophers) theoretically reduce it to something else in the cosmos, and in doing so, theoretically destroy or annihilate it.⁶³

The recognition of this plurality of radical diversity does not amount to pluralism, however, because every radically distinguishable idion⁶⁴, or cosmic ‘given’ is in-self-sufficient, created and law-subjected, and all of them together find their trans-cosmic unity in God; also, because of the mutual and relational⁶⁵ coherence of the radical diversity. And this coherence is another te-al ontic *a priori* of the cosmos, because it also finds its origin in God. The Calvinistic philosopher will attempt to trace this coherence in the radical diversity, at the same time taking care not to violate it.

Calvinists have in the past often emphasised the principle of ‘sphere sovereignty’⁶⁶. This principle finds its justification in the God-given radical diversity in the cosmos. The Philosophy of the Cosmonomic idea correctly indicated that we also require another principle for expressing the coherence among that which is radically distinguishable, namely the principle of ‘sphere-universality’. (We shall return to these principles.)

iii. The Calvinistic philosopher (just as the Christian special scientist) has the task of discovering the laws (among others, natural laws and norms) pertaining to (*in casu*) the radical diversity in and of the cosmos, and to its coherence. The philosopher accepts the creation-order of God as a te-al, ontic *a priori* of the cosmos. There may be some differences of opinion among Calvinists with regard to the law and the cosmic order that apply to the cosmos. But they have consensus that the cosmic order finds its origins in God; that it applies to the cosmos as totality and as coherent radical diversity; that it is an expression of God’s absolute sovereignty over creation; that the law forms a distinctive boundary between God and cosmos because God is the Law-giver and the cosmos is law-subject, and that therefore the cosmos or anything cosmic can not

⁶³ The same te-al ontic *a priori* is *mutatis mutandis* also applicable in the fields of the special sciences / disciplines.

⁶⁴ See footnote 9.

⁶⁵ See footnote 14.

⁶⁶ Some of them have objections to the formulation of this principle, but not to its actual meaning.

transcend this cosmic order. Even when a person transgresses the normative cosmic order, the cosmic order still remains in place and valid; the transgressor becomes a guilty party and prone to be judged. The Calvinistic philosopher will also not deny the cosmic order (as anomists, indeterminists and casualists tend to do); they will not absolutise the cosmic order (as nomists, determinists and fatalists tend to do); they will not subjectivise the cosmic order (as nominalists, conceptualists and followers of psychologisms do); they will also not attempt to relativise its (coherent) diversity by reducing it to a single or a few types of law (the way that many reductionist philosophies in effect do).

He / she will distinguish between the divine cosmic order / normative-order and the human attempts at positivising it (i.e. positively follow-up), and will maintain that the latter has to be conform to the former.

He / she also accepts that (according to God's Word) wonder (the way God works) and law (applicable to cosmic idions and their coherence) are never in conflict, that law is founded in wonder, and that God uses the law in his service through his miracles (wonders)⁶⁷.

iv. Of the other te-al cosmic *a priori*s we only mention that of the abnormality of humankind and the cosmos. The Calvinistic philosopher 'sees' sin and evil for what they are, i.e. in the light of God's Word Revelation, as deviations from the destination that God has put aside for human beings and the cosmos (and not negatively as the absence of the good, and also not relatively as the less good). Sin and evil are devastating forces that oppose God's ordination. He / she also accepts, according to God's Word, that God through his grace and kindness, and despite sin and evil, maintains the cosmos and governs it; that human beings have to struggle against sin and evil; but that in principle, and therefore also finally, only the redemptive and recreating conciliatory death of Jesus Christ can conquer sin and evil. All of this is also a te-al *a priori*. [\[Back to Contents\]](#)

3.c. *The te-al hominid (or anthropological) a priori*^{67a}

i. The abovementioned te-al cosmic *a priori*s also applies to the human being. Because the human being belongs to the cosmos, and the cosmos to the human being.

⁶⁷ See B en M.

^{67a} In some respects, we could have referred to a religious ontic *a priori* here. See footnotes 39 and 58.

ii. We only mention the following typical te-al hominid *a priori*. The human being (in the same way as matter, plant and animal) is only a creature and is part of the cosmos, just as the cosmos is part of the human being. The human being is unique, however. The human being is created in the image / likeness of God. He or she has a particular place and role in the cosmos. He or she has been appointed *mandator Dei* in the cosmos. God gave him / her vocation to govern over nature, to form culture, to lovingly care for his / her fellow human being and for him- / herself, to love, serve, respect and honour God and to fulfil his / her creaturely task of helping the cosmos reaching its destination (that God has determined for it). In all of this, he / she should be accountable (obedient to God's will and law) and responsible to God, and in doing so execute his / her freedom. The human being is a body and soul unity. Humanity is a unity in its descent ('out of one blood'); the re-born generation in Christ is a unity. Human authority also finds its origin in God. Human beings are mortal due to sin; but there is also a resurrection. Because of the human being's fall into sin, a battle rages - in the heart of each human being, among individuals, among individuals and social structures, and between social structures - described by Augustine as a battle between the Empire of the Light and the Empire of Darkness.

For this reason, the Calvinistic philosopher rejects, among others, all forms of humanism (autonomy, self-sufficiency and absolutising of the human being), all forms of naturalism (which denaturalise the human being by downgrading him / her to the status of animal, nature or matter), all forms of determinism (which eliminate human responsibility and freedom), all forms of indeterminism (which place the human being above the law of God), all denial of the (coherent) radical diversity in and of humankind (such as we would find among reductionist philosophies), all forms of pessimism (since God governs in his kindness and wisdom, and since Christ conquers sin and evil), all optimism (since the human being is a sinner and the world is filled with evil), and so on. [\[Back to Contents\]](#)

3.d. *The te-al gnotic (or gnoseologic) a priori*⁶⁸

i. Human knowing and knowledge form part of the cosmos, just as animal instinct or the germination of a plant seed do. This is why the te-al cosmic *a priori* also applies to human knowing and knowledge. It is, furthermore, a human being that knows. This is

⁶⁸ See footnote 21a, my *B. en M.*, my *Die eenheid van die wetenskap* (among others also the *Addendum*) in *Referate (Papers)* read at the general meeting of the S.A. Akademie, 1967 as well as my article on *Christelike Wetenskap*, in volume II, *O EN R*. Also see footnote 67a.

why the te-al hominid *a priori* also applies to his or her knowing activity and to knowledge.

ii. There is a difference of opinion among Calvinistic philosophers regarding the issue of knowing and knowledge⁶⁹. All of them tend to agree with the following, however. We have to distinguish between the absolute knowing and knowledge of God, the creaturely, in-self-sufficient, law-subject but accountable and responsible knowing and knowledge of human beings, and the auto-kinetic knowing and knowledge of animals. Concerning human knowing, we should distinguish between his / her aptitude to know and knowing, the knowable (including God's Word Revelation, and also the cosmos), and knowledge as result of exploring the knowable through the process of knowing. Knowing and the knowable are mutually irreducible, despite the fact that each of them co-relationally requires the presence of the other. Both the human being's aptitude to know and the knowability of God and the cosmos, as well as their reciprocal relationship, have their origins in God. Apart from the assertion that the knowable can be known, there is also a direct or immediate relationship between knowing as such and the knowable as such^{69a}.

We have to distinguish between pre-scientific knowing and science, even though the latter finds its origin in the former. Knowing does not only demand sensory observation and thinking, but also *inter alia* self-observation, intuition and faith. Faith and knowing does not form a contradiction; all forms of knowing find their roots in faith (in general terms), and religious knowing in religious faith. In a particular sense, the latter is a te-al gnostic *a priori*. Having recognised the creaturely-ness of human knowing (and thought) – and in doing so recognising its dependence on God, its in-self-sufficiency and law-subjectedness as well as its dependence on the knowable – the Calvinistic philosopher rejects (not the accountable and responsible unique nature of knowing and of thinking) but rather the autonomy (independent self-sufficiency) of knowing and thinking. The Calvinistic philosopher also acknowledges the creaturely limitedness of human knowledge, and in doing so he / she recognises the distinction between truths of which

⁶⁹ This can be observed from a comparison of the relevant views of among others Bavinck, Vollenhoven, Dooyeweerd, Van Riessen and myself. We return to this later.

^{69a} Our knowing encounter with the knowable occurs among others in perceiving, including sense observation, introspection, experience of resistance, Du-Evidenz, intuitive insight into the self-evident, religious belief in God's Word Revelation – see footnote 68..In essence, this (knowing encounter) cannot be correctly understood if one uses an epistemology that is based on an indirect relationship between perceiving and the knowable by using in between the knowable reality and the knowing perception / observation certain physical-chemical stimuli and physiological, sensory processes as explanatory principles.

the human being can take cognisance but which are essentially hyperdox⁷⁰, in other words transcend the powers of his / her reasoning, and those truths that he / she can grasp with their mind, can explain and understand. Gnotic truth⁷¹ is when knowing (and knowledge) is in accordance with the knowable.

e. All the te-al *a priori*s of the field of philosophical inquiry do not imply an external, mechanical and dogmatic addition to the cosmos, but reveal to us (in the light of God's Word) the cosmos itself as it really and truly is in its relationship with and dependence on God. With this perspective^{71a}, the Calvinistic philosopher investigates the cosmos as cosmos in its totality and radical diversity.

By accepting the light of the te-al *a priori*^{71b}, we do not theologise Calvinistic Philosophy, firstly because the te-al *a priori* can be pre-scientifically known. Secondly, because Calvinistic Philosophy as such does not inquire into the Word Revelation of God about God himself and his relationship with all 'things'; in other words, it does not philosophise about God (as He has revealed himself)⁷², but only about the cosmos in its totality and its coherent radical diversity. In the third place, because the philosopher does not approach the cosmos *from* its theo-centricity (as revealed in God's Word) but rather investigates the cosmos as cosmos *in* its theo-centricity. In the fourth place, because the philosopher finds him- or herself in an interactive relationship⁷³ with the theologian

⁷⁰ Hyperdoxes are, for instance, the notions that God determines everything, but that human beings are responsible for their own deeds, that God preordains but that human beings are culpable because of sin, that Christ was both God and human being, that the radical diversity in the cosmos indeed coheres. The relationship between all of these apparently contradictory truths transcend the powers of the human mind (comprehension). We prefer to avoid the term paradoxes (truths that are in conflict with the human reason) because paradoxes (rationalistically) presupposes the human reason to be the criterion of truth.

⁷¹ See my B. en M.

^{71a} For the technical meaning of 'perspective' see my Academy paper mentioned in footnote 68; as well as article 4 in this Volume.

^{71b} See footnote 67a.

⁷² Philosophers who philosophise about God, the Archê, the Absolute and Totally All-sufficient are theologising (their) Philosophy (i.e. turning Philosophy into Theology).

⁷³ See footnote 42. Those truths required by Philosophy in its field of inquiry but which cannot be founded or proved there, and which belong to the field of Theology (for instance), have to be borrowed from Theology in reciprocal collaboration and dialogue with theologians (in the same way as *mutatis mutandis* theologians occasionally have to borrow truths in reciprocal collaboration from Philosophy.) This process does not amount to theologising Philosophy. Likewise, Physics is also not 'mathematised' through making use of mathematical findings and conclusions that it needs, but cannot ground or prove in its own field of investigation.

Amplification: What I said here has been misunderstood. For further explanation and correction, see Addendum 1 of volume II of O EN R.

regarding the te-al *a priori* of the field of philosophical inquiry; *mutatis mutandis* the special scientist finds him- or herself in an interactive relationship with Philosophy while pursuing its own ground-concepts.

But – and this is remarkable – precisely because of presupposing and accepting the te-al *a priori*, Calvinistic Philosophy is an open system that acknowledges all the diversity and coherence in the cosmos just as it is, and accepts aspects of truth in other philosophical systems (freed from their ‘-ism-ic’ falsehoods) and assign to them their rightful places. In principle, it does not suffer from any form of reductionism (such as can be found among the ‘-ism-ic’ Philosophies). The Calvinistic philosopher therefore also wishes to engage in open and critical conversation with dissidents in order to help him / her penetrate the final grounds of mutual differences. He or she also disputes all forms of syncretism that strives to reconcile the te-al *a priori* (as revealed by the light of God’s Word) with an *a priori* based on other (absolutised) roots. But because of the philosopher’s own sinful nature and the concomitant danger of error, the practice of Calvinistic Philosophy has to constantly stand by the dictum of *reformanda quia reformata*. [\[Back to Contents\]](#)

III. PHILOSOPHY OF THE CREATION IDEA⁷⁴

A. *Introduction*

1.a. In the section above, we distinguished between four *main* tasks of Philosophy (See section I. b. vi.).

i. Understanding the cosmos as cosmos (created reality as such); the quest for the encompassing fundamental nature and meaning of the cosmos. This task includes the quest for the te-al *a priori*, particularly because the cosmos as such is creaturely, in-self-sufficient, law-subjected, and so on, and therefore points beyond itself to its Origin (God, the Archê). This is the quest for the radical fundamental⁷⁵, the actual, ground-question of Philosophy. It ‘sees’ the cosmos in its relatedness as cosmos with the Archê (its Origin,

⁷⁴ See footnote 1.

⁷⁵ Fundamental in radical sense pertains to the absolute Ground. Fundamental in relational sense pertains to cosmic grounds, e.g., fundamental distinctions about colour: quality, intensity, extensiveness, and form. In the case of ‘fundamental in relational sense’ it makes more sense to speak of more or less fundamental.

God, the Absolute and Totally All-sufficient). This totality issue is the philosophical ground question in its primary sense. The answer to this question is called the ground-idea of Philosophy.

- ii. Understanding the (mutually irreducible, i.e.) radical diversity of and in the cosmos. This question pertains to the cosmic origins (the cosmic original, the primordial idions, the *archai*). With this question, each cosmic original or primordial idion is investigated in its cosmic irreducible (to anything else) fundamental nature or essence and/or meaning.
- iii. Understanding the coherence of the radical diversity in the cosmic totality, while pursuing all the (mutually irreducible) types of coherence (relationships, connections, intertwinements, and so forth) between primordial idions, and how they have been ‘woven’ together in the totality of the cosmos. This is the quest for the cosmic totality in its secondary sense.
- iv. Understanding the fundamental nature and meaning of a primordial idion – radically distinguishable and irreducible to any other primordial idion – and its place and role in the totality of the cosmos (in the mutually connected double meaning of ‘totality’).

1.b. Philosophical disciplines can be sub-divided in different ways⁷⁶.

The main division is: Philosophical Systematics (or Systematic Philosophy), History of Philosophy and Philosophical Movements (Approaches, Schools, Directions, etc.).

Philosophical Systematics (to which this article is limited) investigates the four questions mentioned above, and can in turn be sub-divided into *General Philosophical Cosmology* and *Special Philosophical Disciplines*.

General Philosophical Cosmology searches for answers to the first three questions mentioned above. It covers the following themes: firstly the theory of te-al cosmic *a priori*, together with the problem of the boundary between Theology and Philosophy, and the reciprocal collaboration between these two sciences. In the second place, among others, Cosmological Ontology, General Theory of Principles, the Theory of Hapantic Qualifications, that of Idiostances (matter, plant, animal and the human being), that of cosmic dimensions (viz. of modalities, of events, of individual and social idiostantic

⁷⁶ The *Philosophy of the Revelation Idea* differentiates Theology, Philosophy, Human- and Natural-sciences. The *Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea* differentiates Philosophy and special-sciences (even though difficulties were found adding Social-Sciences to this). I gave my own divisions in K.I.D.K., II and III., in *Beginsels en Metodes van die Hoëre Onderwys* (Van Schaik, 1949) and B. en M. See footnote 21 as well.

structures and of values), the coherence of radical cosmic diversity, and the theory of the cosmic order.

The *Special Philosophical Disciplines* can be sub-divided into the *Main Special Philosophical Disciplines* and the *Particular Special Philosophical Disciplines*. All of these Special Philosophical Disciplines (except Philosophy of Religion) have to find answers to the fourth abovementioned question; they therefore find themselves in a special reciprocal and collaborative relationship with all the different special sciences / disciplines. Gnoseology, Epistemology (Theory of Knowledge) and Philosophy of Science (among the *Special Philosophical Disciplines*) form part of the intermediate-sciences or –disciplines⁷⁷.

We will now restrict this discussion to Philosophical Systematics, more to the point and firstly, *General Philosophical Cosmology*.

The first main task of Philosophy (III.A.i.a.i. above), namely the theory of te-al cosmic *a priori*, in my opinion, confronts one with the key problem that could lead to an understanding or disclosure of the cosmos (as totality and as coherent radical diversity). The other philosophical problems are seen, approached and investigated, and philosophical disciplines are constructed, in terms of this key. In fundamental terms (and therefore in broad outline), the findings and conclusions that are made in this respect determine the results of all philosophical inquiry⁷⁸. Some regard the choice of this key as an existential decision. If one looked deeper, however, one would see this choice fundamentally as one of religious conviction⁷⁹. This choice is also inextricably interwoven with the particular life- and world-view⁸⁰. This key presents us with the first (or last, highest or deepest, as the case may be) (pre-)suppositions from which Philosophy departs – whether explicitly or implicitly, consciously or not, critically responsibly or not. We are dealing here with the fundamental question of Philosophy, a question profoundly related to what Dooyeweerd called the religious ground-motive of Philosophy.

⁷⁷ See footnote 21a. As well as my article on *Christelike Wetenskap*, in volume II O EN R.; especially see sections III.D. and IV of this study.

⁷⁸ See footnotes 39, 58, 59, 105 as well as section III.B.2.c.iv.

⁷⁹ Pre-scientific acquisition of knowledge of the Absolute (either through the revelation in the Word of God or through absolutising of, for instance, the cosmos or a part of the cosmos) is only possible through the religious faith faculty (Calvin: *sensus divinitatis*).

⁸⁰ All Philosophy finds its origin in a particular pre-scientific life- and world-view, and is inextricably interwoven with it.

This fundamental question should first be stated, then meticulously analysed and answered before we attend to the other tasks of Philosophy – and this must be done in a conscious, explicit and critically responsible way. But let me say at once that this fundamental question cannot be answered once and for all, because Philosophy also progresses (has its own history); philosophers constantly find themselves confronted with new problems in connection with this fundamental question. [\[Back to Contents\]](#)

B. *The ground-question – the totality question in primary sense*

1.a. *The two possibilities*

We can search for the key, for the answer to the ground-question, *within* the cosmos. That would give us an internal- (or inside) cosmic vision of the cosmos. Or we can go looking for it *outside* the cosmos itself, which would give us an external- (or outside) cosmic vision of the cosmos⁸¹. We are confronted with an *a priori* choice here, an existential (or even better, a religious faith) choice that is determined from within by the relevant life- and world-view. We find examples of an internal-cosmic choice and vision in Materialism, Idealism, Positivism, Humanism, Rationalism, Existentialism and so forth, which respectively assume the key to doing Philosophy to be found in either matter, ideas, ‘facts’, the human being, reason, situated existence, and so on. As indicated elsewhere, acceptance of such an internal-cosmic key that can lead among others to the absolutising of something in our in-self-sufficient cosmos, inevitably results in a reduction of the radical diversity to a privileged cosmic ‘something’ (or idion), and therefore also to a relativising or even elimination of this diversity, to a simplistic (overly simplified), unilateral view of the cosmos and to a denial of all the respective (mutually irreducible) coherence (relationships, connections, intertwinements) of the radical diversity, and along with that, also to a narrowing or rather a falsification of the cosmic order.

In contrast to such an approach, the Word of God reveals to us that although all things are from, through and to God, God does not form part of the cosmos⁸², that the cosmos

⁸¹ For this distinction between the external and internal cosmic visions of the cosmos, see *B. en M.* We commence with an external-cosmic vision of the cosmos, and this is why we call our Philosophy theocentric. In the light of this we then proceed to our internal-cosmic investigation of the cosmos. A philosopher who fails to engage an external-cosmic vision of the cosmos, and tries to investigate the cosmos from the beginning from an internal-cosmic vision, practises a cosmocentric Philosophy. What we distinguish as theocentric versus cosmocentric Philosophy is distinguished (in a different sense) by the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea as transcendence versus immanence Philosophy.

⁸² Panencosmism sees God as a higher reality in the cosmos, and panentheism regards the cosmos as a lower reality within God. See Koers, IV, 4.

(the earthly created universe) and everything that belongs to the cosmos are creatures, in-self-sufficient and subject to the divine will and law. This key is external-cosmic and therefore gives us an external-cosmic vision of the cosmos. Allow me to explain this in anthropomorphic terms: with this key we see and gain insight into the cosmos with a divine eye-view, the way God sees it. Let us not forget that this vision remains a human one (creaturely, in-self-sufficient, law- or rather norm-bound); we cannot know the cosmos the way God does. A human being can see the cosmos from outside in a creaturely manner, in other words, a creaturely manner from God's perspective, because God has created him or her with a religious faith faculty, and revealed Himself (and his relationship with all things) to human beings in a creaturely manner. With this external-cosmic key we need not absolutise anything in the cosmos, or relativise the radical diversity in the cosmos, or deplete it. On the contrary, we can avail ourselves of a multilateral (universal) view of the cosmos, thereby doing justice to all the respective types of coherence of the radical diversity, and also fully acknowledging the ontic order of and for the cosmos (which also finds its origins in God) in its rich, coherent variety.

There are still other questions that can be viewed from either an exclusively internal-cosmic or a primarily external-cosmic vision; I will limit myself to mentioning only that of good and evil, that of selection and choice of methods⁸³, that of truth, and so on^{83a}.

We chose – in accordance with the Scriptural revelation of God – an external-cosmic key that can unlock the cosmos for us in light of the fact that God is the Origin of everything. Once we have justified our choice for this external-cosmic vision of the cosmos (the ground-question), we can proceed to an internal-cosmic investigation of the cosmos in light of the first vision. In other words, we can determine what the cosmos (in its in-self-sufficiency, 'creatureliness', and law-subjectedness) offers us; in other words, proceed to the other tasks of Philosophy that we mentioned above.

There is also another possibility, namely the acceptance of two or more principal keys: that of being and becoming; of form and matter; of spirit and matter; of freedom and nature; and so on. These are examples of two internal-cosmic keys. There is yet another possibility, and that is (in accordance with the doctrine of nature and grace that we find among Roman Catholic philosophers) to make use of two principal keys, one of which is external-cosmic and the other internal-cosmic. The acceptance and application of more

⁸³ See my *Outlines of a Deontology of Scientific Method* in O EN R volume II, as well as footnote 68.

^{83a} See footnote 81 and B en M.

than one principal key leads (as Dooyeweerd so brilliantly argued) to antinomies and internally contradictory tensions. According to God's Word, there is only one Absolute Ground that has no autonomous and independent counter-body or –authority, and that is God. We therefore accept only this one external-cosmic key for unlocking the cosmos as cosmos (as such) (the cosmos in its in-self-sufficiency, creatureliness and law-subjected-ness), from, through and to Whom all things are. [\[Back to Contents\]](#)

1.b. Two external-cosmic approaches

According to his Word revelation, God made the earth (the 'earthly' created universe) in the beginning and it was good, very good indeed. Let us call this (to borrow Calvin's term) 'the order of creation'. In our current dispensation, the human being is a sinner, however, and the world replete with evil. Because of the redemptive death of Christ, the human being has in principle been released from sin, and the cosmos recreated, a state of affairs that will only come to complete actualisation in the fullness of time. Let us call this (to borrow another term from Calvin) 'the order of fall into sin and redemption' – or more generally 'the order of sin and evil as well as of redemption and recreation'. The second order (that of sin and evil), did not destroy the first order but has profoundly desecrated / defaced it, and torn it apart. The human being (for instance) remained a human being despite the ravages of the fall into sin and did not change into a devil or an animal; human knowing (including thinking, reason) remained knowing despite the darkness brought about by sin; plants and animals remained respectively plants and animals in spite of (for instance) diseases. The first ontic-order remains valid in the second, despite the transgression, because it has acquired new significance in terms of the second order (fall into sin and evil but also redemption and recreation).

The term 'the order of the creation' does not refer to the original creation (*in casu* cosmos) and its goodness, indeed very goodness, in the beginning (before the fall into sin), and also not the creation (or cosmos) as it would have developed had there been no sin and evil. We understand 'the order of the creation' to refer to the creation (or cosmos) as it was created *and* still exists and is maintained by God, in other words, the creation (or cosmos) in our dispensation without taking into account sin and evil, and their effects. It is possible (*in casu*, also philosophically) to know the cosmos in our dispensation in its 'order of creation', firstly because, despite sin and evil and their effects, the cosmos has remained the cosmos (and, for example, the human being has remained human being; animal remained animal; plant remained plant; thought

remained thought; et cetera), and secondly, because the light of God's Word Revelation enables us to do so.

By accepting the notion of the two orders, we do not create a dualism in our view of the cosmos the way philosophers do who depart in their views from two independent ground-keys, nature and grace for instance. Because we see the whole of the cosmos as good, as created very good, the entire cosmos is also subject to fall and decay, and is redeemed in Christ.

When we now look for an answer to the ground-question of Philosophy (including any of the other relevant questions), do we have to take into account the first order (that of creation) or the second order (the current dispensation, that of sin and evil as well as of redemption and recreation)? Do we have to depart from the idea that all things are from, through and to God, or that Christ is the Saviour and Re-creator, and that God has given to his Christ all the power on earth and in heaven? This is an important question, because when we change our point of departure, we also broadly change our problem statement, we change the nature of the investigation as well as the results that we can expect. Because Calvinistic philosophers make different choices here, they create different nuances in Calvinistic Philosophy. Let us take one example. According to Kuyper, the state has become necessary because of the fall into sin; it was instituted for the purpose of combating injustice and disorder. Dooyeweerd maintains that the power of the sword is a *sine qua non* (and this presupposes the existence of sin that has to be bridled). Both of these visions clearly begin with the second order. But, we ask ourselves, would the institution of the state in accordance with the first order (if there had been no fall into sin) have been impossible? Would increasing differentiation among societal structures not have necessitated the institution of yet another societal structure (in this case, the state), an institution that (in accordance with the peace of the first dispensation) would have had the task (and still have it today) of regulating the juridical inter-order of individuals and societal structures? In my opinion, we should reply in the affirmative to these questions. But, and this is the important point, can the task of the state, i.e. of juridically regulating the inter-order among individuals and societal structures, not be seen as precisely its task in our present dispensation – in accordance with the order of creation, in other words, irrespective of sin and evil (including injustice)? Only then may we attend to sin and evil, and see the power of the sword and the bridling of evil as encompassing task of the state. The choice whether to begin with the first or

the second order therefore clearly makes a difference⁸⁴. Beginning with the first order does not imply ignoring or eliminating the second; it merely means that the second order should be investigated in the light of examination and understanding of the first order. The second order (that of sin and evil) is sometimes typified as an abnormality in fundamental ('principal') sense⁸⁵, because it amounts to an offence and disruption of the first order (that of creation) which, in principle, is normal, in other words, good, yes, very good indeed. In this respect, I would accept the position that the normal cannot be understood in terms of the abnormal, but rather the other way round.

We therefore formulate our initial ground-question about the cosmos as cosmos in accordance with the order of creation. [\[Back to Contents\]](#)

2. Some Calvinistic answers to the ground-question about the cosmos as cosmos

2.a. Introductory remark

In approaching this problem according to the order of creation, we selectively and relevantly put aside the fact that God (in Christ) is the Merciful, the Redeemer, the Re-creator, the Pre-destinator, et cetera, and depart from the fact that God is the Creator, the Law-giver, the Revealer, the Sovereign and Dispensator and Completer of our created universe. There are still more such relationships between God and cosmos, such as we find in the notions of God as Love, as the Totally Good, the Omniscient, the Omnipotent, and so on. Each of these relationships of God with the cosmos casts a particular light on the cosmos as cosmos, and helps us understand the cosmos as cosmos in a particular respect. The Calvinistic philosopher has to take account of all of them. But, when asking what the cosmos is (in other words, what its fundamental nature and meaning could be), the philosopher is confronted with the question which of all these te-al *a priori* of the cosmos is the most encompassing for his / her philosophical

⁸⁴ I can give many examples in this regard; for instance, in my analyses of the human being, labour, education, human freedom, history, morality, justice, religion, and so on, I find in every case that one should depart from the order of creation. Only then, and in the light of this, one can investigate these idiosyncrasies according to the order of sin, redemption, and that if one approached these idiosyncrasies from the opposite end, one would state the problems differently and would come up with quite different results.

⁸⁵ The acknowledgement of the te-al and of the religious ontic *a priori* (of the cosmos (the world) and the human being respectively) is – according to the Word of God – fundamental to the Calvinistic life- and world-view and *in casu* to Calvinistic Philosophy. This is our position in opposition to the *a priori* of philosophers who depart from the belief statement that the cosmos has always fundamentally (in 'principal' sense) been the way it currently is. This means that their philosophies would have to be different from that of Calvinists.

task. An examination of the nuances of Calvinistic Philosophy reveals in my opinion only three answers to the principal key question, namely those of the Philosophies of the Revelation Idea, the Cosmonic Idea and of the Creation Idea. [\[Back to Contents\]](#)

2.b. The Revelation Idea as Ground-Idea

H. Bavinck and V. Hepp enable us to distinguish between four revelation ideas.

- a. God's revelation of Himself within the Trinity. This is a theological problem in its entirety, and we need not discuss it here.
- b. God's revelation to Himself through his works. This is another totally theological problem, and we need not attend to it here.
- c. God's revelation to human beings (in his Word and in his creation) about Himself and his relationship with all things. This is largely, but not exclusively, a theological issue. Not exclusively, because for instance, Philosophical Anthropology, Philosophy of Science, Gnoseology, as well as Epistemology, and for instance also Philosophy of Religion find themselves confronted with the issue of religious faith as knowing activity (or rather function). We encounter the religious faith (*sensus divinitatis* — Calvin) of human beings here in the cosmos as cosmos; it is something quite typical of human beings, entirely creaturely, in-self-sufficient and law-subjected.
- d. God's revelation of the cosmos — matter, plant, animal and human being — *to human beings*. This issue might have a theological side. But — when looked at closely — it is a philosophical issue. It is a problem regarding i. the knowability of the cosmos; ii. the ability of the human being to know the cosmos; and iii. the relationship between both. This is because all revelation (including in this fourth form) presupposes someone who reveals, something that is being revealed, and somebody to whom is being revealed.

Can the cosmos, in its fundamental nature and meaning, be regarded as revelation? We can hardly improve on H. Bavinck's answer to this question^{85a}: "The whole world is itself imbedded in revelation; revelation is the presupposition, the foundation, the secret of the entire creation and all its formations. The deeper science digs, the better it observes revelation spread like a foundation under every creature. In every moment of time, the pulse of eternity can be felt beating; each point in space is filled with God's omnipresence; the transitory is being carried by the In-transitory and all becoming is rooted in being. For all creatures, the particular revelation that comes to us in the person

^{85a} Cf. his publication *Wijsbegeerte der Openbaring*, J.H. Kok, Kampen, 1908, p. 23.

of Christ is founded on these very same presuppositions.” And elsewhere⁸⁶: “In the self-conscious⁸⁷ God introduced the human being, the world and Himself to the human being... This revelation is therefore not of the greatest importance only to religion, but also to Philosophy, especially the Theory of Knowledge.”

Can the revelation idea be regarded as the principal key to the creation as *creation*? In my opinion, it can not. The revelation idea is in my opinion the principal key to understanding our *knowledge* of the cosmos (including our *knowledge* of ourselves; and also our *knowledge* of God) but not of the *cosmos as cosmos* in its creaturely dependent nature and meaning. In my opinion the *cosmos as cosmos* is a creation (of God), and therefore it is the creation idea that supplies Philosophy with the principal key to the understanding of the cosmos. A deeper or higher vision of creation cannot be philosophical in nature anymore. Of course, Theology can offer a deeper vision of creation when it posits, for instance, that creation is Self-revelation of God to Himself through his works. But Philosophy being Philosophy cannot reach that far.

The *cosmos as cosmos* (and with that also its fundamental nature and meaning) is a creation (of God). We place “of God” in parentheses because the philosopher has to presuppose and accept that God is the Creator of the cosmos but that the action of creating (and recreating) in my opinion falls outside the ambit of Philosophy, and is an issue for Theology. I say this in reply to the criticism of F.J.M. Potgieter⁸⁸ on my view that creation is the most comprehensive ground-idea (or key) because it embraces the law, but also remains more than revelation and law (taken both separately and together). When Potgieter states that the *creatio* does not embrace the *revelatio* of the Father to the Logos, or that it cannot embrace the revelation in the Council or in the *recreatio*, that

⁸⁶ See his *Wijsbegeerte der Openbaring*, p. 66.

⁸⁷ Bavinck developed his theory of consciousness with great inspiration. However, what he has developed reflects only one side of the knowledge problem. In our opinion, animals are extatically conscious; they are conscious but do not know that they are; they are in other words not self-conscious. Human beings are reflexively conscious; they are conscious and immediately know that they are (apart from being extatically conscious in the case of dreams, hypnosis, and so on). On the other hand: the human being is in my opinion not only conscious of something but also aware of what he or she is conscious of; he or she is not only conscious of, for instance, a tree, but also immediately of the tree as tree. This enables the tree to be evidence of itself. This has to be accounted for in the Calvinistic Theory of Knowledge. In contrast, an animal is aware / conscious of, for instance, food as symbol of hunger appeasement, but not aware / conscious of the food as food.

⁸⁸ See his thesis entitled *Die Verhouding tussen die Teologie en die Filosofie by Calvyn* (Noord-Hollandsche Uitgeversmaatschappij, Amsterdam, 1939, p. 222-3). In this publication, Potgieter associates himself with the views of H. Bavinck, and especially those of his promotor, V. Hepp.

— as far as the law is concerned — *creatio* does not necessarily include the *ordo*, since the *formatio* follows logically and chronologically after the first *creatio*, and that the *providentia* (*conservatio*, *concursus* and *gubernatio*) and *recreatio* are not included in the *creatio*, then it seems that he is here concerned with actions of God. If I say, on the other hand, that the cosmos as cosmos is a creation (of God), then I am not concerned with the actions of God but rather with the ‘product’ of his creative work, *in casu* this created cosmos as cosmos, the extant ‘earthly created universe’⁸⁹, the *universum* to which also human beings belong, and in which they find themselves (together with matter, plant and animal), and in which they have been appointed as stewards for the purpose of fulfilling their (God-given) vocation. This created cosmos (as it exists) is a ‘being’, a ‘reality’ with a self-stance (or own presence),⁹⁰ an ‘earthly’ created universe that embraces (if you will: encompasses) revelation⁹¹ as well as law. This is why we firstly encounter here in the cosmos, in creation, the Word of God which we read daily (the given revelation of God of Himself and his relationship with all things). And also, in a special sense, the Creation (or ‘nature’) revelation of God, and with it also his presence, his omnipresence and immanence, are with us. Please do not misunderstand; the actions of God involved here do not fall in the field of philosophical inquiry; however, the creaturely, in-self-sufficient and pointing-to-God fundamental nature of the cosmos is at once also an expression of his love, kindness, wisdom and omnipotence; the entire cosmos attests to this. And this is philosophically important. The Word and Creation Revelation of God is here with us as *fanerosis* (content of revelation), in a creaturely manner in creation or created cosmos. It is only in this particular sense that created cosmos (as field of philosophical inquiry) speaks of revelation. In the second place (with reference to the last quotation of Bavinck above), we are aware of a revelation (from God) to human beings of the cosmos, based on the knowability of the cosmos and the ability of human beings to know, which both find their origins in God. (We shall return to this point later.) And this knowability of the cosmos as well as the ability of the human being to know is totally

⁸⁹ God’s creation consists of heaven (the abode of the angels) and the earth. What we call cosmos, Vollenhoven calls ‘the earthly created universe’. See footnote 13.

⁹⁰ The distinction between independence and own-stance or self-stance (Afrikaans: “eie-standig” - pgwdup) is of fundamental importance. The cosmos (including the human being) does not enjoy independence with respect to God. However, when taking note of the radical difference between God and cosmos, and wishing to express the unique nature of the cosmos, then we have to use the term ‘self-standing’ with respect to the cosmos. See footnotes 61 and 62.

⁹¹ ‘Revelation’ here does not refer to the revelatory activities of God, but rather the *fanerosis*, the ‘content’ of revelation, that which is revealed, in other words, the knowable (the Word of God and the cosmos).

creaturely — cosmic — in nature. The (God-given) ontic-order of the cosmos (to return to Potgieter) also belongs to this cosmos of ours, it ‘functions’ in this cosmos, and it is the task (among others) of scientists (including philosophers) to discover this ontic-order and to examine it. In this particular sense, the cosmos as creation also includes the cosmic-order of God. We can go further still. The creation idea, i.e. created cosmos (as ‘earthly created universe’), lapsed into sin and evil. We are aware of this in everything around us, but – according to God’s Word – the cosmos has *in principle* been redeemed and recreated through the reconciliatory death of Jesus Christ, in other words, it is impossible to remove the fruit and action of redemption and recreation out of this cosmos. This is why — and this is philosophically momentous — there rages (according to Augustine) in this very cosmos of ours a battle between the Realm of Light and the Realm of Darkness; and for this battle — insofar as it is cosmic in nature (note how the battle at times can rage for instance in a person’s heart) — the philosopher should take cognisance of it. We contend that the creation idea can offer us the encompassing unity of the philosophical field of inquiry, including revelation and law insofar as we can discover it in the cosmos as products of the creative work of God. When Potgieter argues that there can be only one solution, namely that an ordained plurality of principles, each possessing *independent meaning* (my emphasis), should form the foundation of Philosophy, we do not at all deny the plurality of principles. The relationship of God to the cosmos (or the dependence of the cosmos on God) takes a variety of forms. God is Creator, Former, Law-giver, Maintainer, Revealer, Governor, Ordainer, Redeemer, Pre-destinator, Re-creator and Completer and so on, of all things, and the creation on the other hand presupposes God’s love, kindness, wisdom, omnipotence and so on. We should not, however, allocate *independence* to each of these principles that may cause the created cosmos to lose its unity in plurality. In his or her examination of this cosmos as cosmos — in other words, as creation — the philosopher should presuppose that God governs, ordains, redeems, recreates, finalises, and so on. The philosopher is always concerned about *this* cosmos — philosophy’s particular field of investigation or inquiry — and we suppose this cosmos as *creation* of God (in its radical difference from God and in its fundamental dependence on God) to be a unity of its own thereness, to possess a (God-given) fundamental nature and meaning. In other words, the creation idea provides our practice of Philosophy also with revelation as outlined, as well as the law, and therefore — in philosophical

perspective — with the most encompassing stipulation of this cosmos as cosmos, in other words, of philosophy's actual field of inquiry.

We now return to the Philosophy of the Revelation Idea. According to this approach, revelation is the actual mystery of the cosmos, the principal key that can unlock the cosmos as cosmos. In contrast, the Philosophy of the Creation Idea's reply to the ground-question what the cosmos as cosmos might be, is that it is a creation, a created reality, a created universe, a created 'being'. Comparison of these two answers reveals that the latter is ontological; it tells something about something real, which really exists – whereas the former, if we looked at it closely, is an epistemological, or better and more comprehensively, a gnoseological answer⁹². Revelation exposes something to somebody by communicating with it, or put differently, somebody receives a revelatory communication from somebody else. Revelation is therefore, we contend, the principal key for a Calvinistic Theory of Knowledge (or Gnoseology), and should be presupposed by a Calvinistic Theory of Knowing (or Epistemology).

But knowledge (we are referring to human knowledge) is part of the cosmos, and is connected and intertwined with the rest of the cosmos, in the same way that for instance, molecular processes, plant growth and animal instinct form part of the cosmos, and are connected and intertwined with the rest of the cosmos. We can see from this that creation in this sense includes revelation, that the creation idea is a more encompassing philosophical ground-idea of the cosmos than the revelation idea. We can also see that the knowable of the cosmos presupposes the cosmos, that the cosmos (as creation) is more encompassing than its knowability (as fanerosis or 'content of revelation').

That the revelation idea as principal key is of fundamental importance for a Calvinistic Gnoseology (and by implication for a Calvinistic Epistemology) can be observed in a diafanerotic examination⁹³ of knowledge. According to this method, perceiving or discerning⁹⁴ - as a partial act of knowing - involves an encounter between the knowing /

⁹² Gnoseology is the theory of knowledge. Epistemology is the theory of knowing. In our opinion, Gnoseology should precede all Epistemology. Epistemological analyses should take place in the light of the findings and conclusions of Gnoseology.

⁹³ See footnote 29.

⁹⁴ Perceiving or discerning is the knowing act involving an encounter between the knowing / knower and the knowable. Perceiving includes sensory observation, introspection, psycho-extrospection, experience of resistance, weighing of values, intuitive insight into the self-evident, religious belief in a revelation of God, and so forth. See my *B. en M* and the Academy paper mentioned in footnote 68.

knower and the knowable. It also respects from the very beginning (*de origine*) the heterogeneity of the knowing act and the knowable (in a special case of, for instance, the act of perceiving a flower and the flower itself);,the knowing / knower with his or her thought — also as a partial act of knowing and as medium in the hands of the knower / knowing — succeeds in eliciting still further revelation from the knowable⁹⁵, knowledge (and knowing) finally amounts to vocation-fulfilling replying to the possibilities (tasks, problems) discovered in and with the knowable. The final key of knowledge (including scientific knowledge) cannot be discovered in *synthesis* (by the human selfness of the logical with the non-logical, as propounded by Dooyeweerd with his transcendental analysis of thought in the case of theoretical — i.e. scientific — knowledge), but rather in *revelation*, in the given-ness of the revealed, and the encounter with, reception and exploitation of this given-ness by means of the knowing ability of the human being. It is our contention that we should not commence with a transcendental examination of thinking / thought (the way Dooyeweerd did), but rather with a diafanerotic examination of knowing and knowledge, and only then in the light of the results of such examination proceed to a transcendental examination of knowing as answering. [\[Back to Contents\]](#)

2.c. *The law idea as ground-idea*

i. In our opinion, the philosophical ground-idea of the cosmos is not the revelation idea but rather the creation idea. The cosmos as cosmos is a creation of God. In contrast to this, the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea (and *in casu* Dooyeweerd, to whose criticism on our views regarding the creation idea we will largely limit ourselves) posits the law idea as the philosophical ground-idea. We say ‘largely’, since it is important to refer in advance to a few points of difference among H. Bavinck (Philosophy of the Revelation Idea) and D.H.Th. Vollenhoven, H. van Riessen and K.J. Popma (Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea) regarding the law.

The ‘law idea’ fulfils a fundamental role in every nuance of Calvinistic Philosophy. But this does not mean that all Calvinistic philosophers in this respect share the viewpoint of the *Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea*. “It is somewhat disturbing that people within a philosophical school⁹⁶ should differ on such a vital point”, Van Riessen wrote on

⁹⁵ In the process of forming knowledge the human being increasingly brings the knowable to exposure. A geologist perceives much more in a sample of iron ore than a non-geologist. See literature mentioned in footnote 94.

⁹⁶ I do not think that we should talk of a *school* of Calvinistic Philosophy but rather of a stream, a movement, a direction.

occasion⁹⁷. But then he also points to Calvinistic philosophers' religious attachment to God's Word, to the Scriptures of Christ and to the Christ of the Scriptures as a point of convergence between them. This dependence on God and his Word is also the "scandalon of Christian philosophy." It does not exclude difference of opinion among Calvinistic philosophers, but takes cognisance of "the exhortation that people should move together and seek discussion with one another, also of the promise that (such discussions) will be meaningful, and that the discussants will reach some consensus during their journeys together."

It is particularly important in my opinion that, in the case of difference of opinion among Calvinistic philosophers, one should first attempt to determine what they seem to agree about, and then to look at the differences, with the things they agree about in the back of one's mind. Failure to do this might lead to exaggeration of differences of opinion, to such an extent that we might not be able to agree on anything else.

Concerning the law idea, all Calvinists accept *inter alia* what God's Word reveals to us about the law (or rather the cosmic order / ontic-order) of God; that God as absolute sovereign Legislator and Sovereign has given the law for all of the cosmos, with no exception; that the law may neither be absolutised nor subjectivised; that the law (or cosmic-order) of God constitutes a distinctive boundary between God and the cosmos (matter, plant, animal and human being) that cannot be transcended by the cosmos (including the human being); that there is a coherent diversity of laws; that the law (or cosmic-order) applies to the cosmos, and that it constantly applies, even when human beings transgress the (normative) cosmic-order; that human freedom and responsibility presuppose the cosmic-order; that science (including Philosophy) has the task of discovering and examining the cosmic-order as far as possible (in other words, within the given creaturely boundaries); that the principle of 'sphere sovereignty'⁹⁸ should be respected not only in the practices of daily existence but also in the context of science and scholarship; and that this principle finds its grounds in the ontic order ordained by God for the cosmos in its diversity; and so on. Our mutual differences of opinion should be understood against this shared background.

ii.Understanding *idea* as 'mode of being' / modality, and *law* as 'manner of actioning and functioning', and by stating that every science / discipline not only discovers and

⁹⁷ See his *Over de betekenis van de wetsidee in de wijsbegeerte* in *Philosophia Reformata*, 1965.

⁹⁸ Some Calvinists object to the formulation of this principle. There is consensus, however, about what is meant with this principle.

formulates laws, but also should ascend through these laws to the ideas, and from the ideas to the thoughts of God and even to God Himself⁹⁹ — a vision co-determined by Bavinck's (in my opinion, controversial) duality of ideality and reality — results in a narrowing down of the law idea. The 'modes of being' / the modalities are subject also to the will and law of God.

iii. Concerning Vollenhoven's law-idea, we limit ourselves to a discussion of his doctrine of the tripartite being, namely that of God, of the law (as validation) and of the cosmos¹⁰⁰. In my opinion, he stretches the law idea by attributing to a law of God and to the cosmos a different 'being'. In opposition to his view, we argue as follows. In our opinion, only two forms of being, namely the absolute, totally self-sufficient "Being" of God, and the in-self-sufficient, creaturely, totally dependent on God "being" of the cosmos.¹⁰¹ God is at the same time Creator and Law-giver of the cosmos. We are able to distinguish within the cosmos the cosmic order and those things (or rather, idions) to which the cosmic order applies; both of them are equally creaturely, and they cohere in an unbreakable and indivisible bond. The cosmos is a creation of God, subject to his ontic order, and therefore embraces his ordinations (law-determinedness). The cosmos finds both the origin of its law-determined creatureliness as well as of its creaturely law-determinedness (in unbreakable complementary connectedness) (together) in God. If one should remove from the equation the law-determinedness of the idions ('creatures'), or the idions (to which the law-determinedness applies), there would be no cosmos. The ontic order is just as creaturely as the idions to which it applies; it is *part of* the cosmos (it belongs to the cosmos; inseparable from the cosmos) and also applies at the same time to the cosmic idions^{101a}. For instance, the law of gravity as well as the physical phenomena to which it applies, and the moral as well as the moral law that applies to it are in an unbreakable coherence with the cosmos. Of course, the law-subjectedness of the cosmos is a distinctive boundary between God and the cosmos, but so is the creatureliness of the idions (the 'creatures') a distinctive boundary that nothing in the cosmos can transcend. The cosmos (as creation) embraces the law (order) as well as

⁹⁹ See footnote 44.

¹⁰⁰ He prefers to understand philosophical systems according to this distinction of a tripartite being in his History of Philosophy. We return to this later.

¹⁰¹ Dooyeweerd distinguishes between the being of God and the cosmos as meaning. We shall return to this as well.

^{101a} Cf. my *B. and M.*

the idions. This explains why the creation idea as philosophical ground-idea is more encompassing than the law-idea.

iv. Van Riessen¹⁰² maintains that the law constitutes a religious bond / connection between the cosmos (creation) and God. I would prefer to speak of a te-al bond or connection (as far as the entire cosmos — matter, plant, animal and human being — is concerned), and only regard this bond or connection as religious¹⁰³ with reference to human beings.

Also, Van Riessen seems to have knowledge only of the *general* law. Even when he writes about the diversity of laws (such as the law of gravity or the law of morality) he seems to refer only to general laws. In my opinion, we should also be aware of another law, which I would call the “universal law”¹⁰⁴ and which is a law for the contingent, ‘once off’, ‘unrepeatable’ ‘oughts’ or duties. One may, for instance, be confronted with a contingent situation (or if you will, circumstance) which is deontically determined (in other words, posits certain duties or ‘oughts’) — to which the relevant general laws (or norms) apply but which do not explicitly determine what should (ought to) be done. The relevant general norms undoubtedly apply when, for instance, a particular young person has to choose a vocation, or a particular leader has to make a decision in certain contingent circumstances; it indicates to them the general direction to take. There is something else in such a particular concrete situation, or real circumstance, for which the general norms do not provide any guidance, a contingent ‘plus’ together with its contingent ‘ought’ demands¹⁰⁵. We find in each of these sets of circumstances (each in its own way) once-off / non-recurrent ‘oughts’ (not ‘laws’ or ‘norms’). But all of these non-recurrent ‘oughts’ can be subsumed under (a) law(s) – or rather norm(s) — which we

¹⁰² See his *Wat is Wijsbegeerte?* in the *Bulletin* of the S.A. Vereniging vir bevordering van Christelike Wetenskap, no. 11, Nov. 1967; his *Mondighed en de Machten* (Buijten en Schipperheijn, Amsterdam, 1967) and also 97.

¹⁰³ See footnotes 39, 58 and 85, as well as part III C.13 of this study.

¹⁰⁴ See among others my article on *Vryheid* in *Koers* XXXI, 7-9 ; as well as article 5 in *O EN R volume II*.

¹⁰⁵ Calvinistic Philosophers neglect (in my opinion) too many Scriptural statements that reveal the contingent; they do not do justice to the fundamental ('principal') meaning of this. I am referring to statements such as we find in Ecclesiastes 3, viz. there is a time to do this, and a time to do that; every human being, every thing has its own time; my (or his) time has not yet come; stipulated times; the destined time; my times are in Your hand; a particular time; fullness of the time; when the time has come; and so on; and also Biblical texts that connect opportunity and time; other texts that refer to the signs (of the times); and so on. The contingent is also grounded in God's governance. Each time, opportunity and sign is not arbitrary but come to the human being with unrecurrent, unrepeatable 'ought' or rather deontic (obligatory) demands.

refer to as the *universal* to distinguish it from general law(s) or norm(s) — in which case each unique ‘ought’ in its unique non-recurrence fully comes into its own. Examples of this are: a. “What (which may differ from case to case) you (which differs from case to case) find (this differs from case to case, from time to time, from place to place) to do, do it with abandonment”; b. “What is the heaviest (which differs from case to case) should weigh the most” ; c. “Act your age and be responsible!”; d. “Answer your call in life!”; e. “Form culture!”; f. “Reform!”; g. “Do everything in moderation!” et cetera. These universal laws for contingent ‘oughts’ (also) apply when the human being is confronted with several choices such as a conflict between duties. Van Riessen seems not to have taken cognisance of this type of universal law, because he tends to approach that which is subject to the law (the *subjects*) too one-sidedly only on the basis of its general determinedness.

Van Riessen states: “In its deepest ground, God’s law is a directive to exist ... Creatures exist because of this command alone ... They then exist in this way or that, as this or that, concomitant with the diversity contained in the law ... The law embodies God’s claim on creation, together with his demands of it, and above all, his love for it¹⁰⁶ ... his law is the command for everything created ... These creatures exist from, through and to God. Here we seem to find God’s law in its general purport ... This general law that governs everything ... determine(s) that all creatures should exist meaningfully¹⁰⁷, in other words, completely focused on God and therefore destined for his Kingdom.” This is, in my opinion, stretching the law. Creation (creating the creatures), and also the maintenance thereof, presupposes a decision by God, which is not yet a command in the sense of being law. Law, on the other hand, is the determination of order that applies to *how* the creatures must / should exist. The fact that all of creation is from, through and to God, is an ontic determination (of being), and, as such, no law. Van Riessen not only fails to distinguish adequately between creation and command (legislation) as well as between the created / the creatures and the law but also seems to dissolve creation / the creatures into the legislation (command) and law. At any rate, he sees more in the law than we do.

Van Riessen distinguishes between law and “the subjects”; we distinguish between the law and the idion (the ‘creature’, such as a ‘thing’, an ‘event’, and so on) that is subject to

¹⁰⁶ See footnote 102.

¹⁰⁷ See footnote 102.

the law, even though they are not separable. We distinguish in this manner between the law of gravity and of a falling stone, or the law for morality or for moral action. The one cannot be reduced to the other. The fact that Van Riessen and other builders of the *Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea* prefer the term ‘subject’ (law-subject) (this is what every idion of course also is) for what we call an ‘idion’, is to attribute to the law such primacy (see the idion mainly in its law-relatedness) that virtually everything becomes focused on their law-determinedness, which is to fail to do justice to distinguishing it, in its own separate creaturely nature, from the law. This is another example of stretching the law. In what Van Riessen (and others) say with respect to the law and law-subjectedness, in their analysis of idions, they do justice to idions and their own unique nature. We shall return to the problematic of the law and the subject when we discuss Dooyeweerd’s reply to my objections against his law-idea as philosophical ground-idea. I personally avoid using the term ‘subject’ (also in the meaning of subject as opposed to object - according to the *Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea*, law-subjects can be both subjects and objects) for distinguishing between the idion (i.c. love) in its ‘being an idion’ (love as being-love) from the law-for-the-idion (e.g. the law for love), and in doing so, I do more justice to it in its own particular nature (without, of course, losing sight of, or denying its law-subjectedness or separating it from its law-subjectedness).

I have to leave aside other striking insights of Van Riessen with respect to the law.

v. The law-ideas of Vollenhoven and Dooyeweerd do not correspond in all respects. We also do not attend to this problem. Popma¹⁰⁸ provides us with a law-idea that agrees in some respects with that of Vollenhoven and in others with that of Dooyeweerd. Popma’s law-idea can be summed up as follows. The creation is a construction of God, for which He has conceived a plan, a council. We can regard the *creation law* as the building plan of God. It is a law *for* (not *of*) the creaturely, and does not belong to the created but should be regarded as a boundary between God and the created. It is a word of God as an expression of his will. The *creation law* in the first place embraces the law-word addressed to the human being as the centre and apex of creation. What we have here is pure law, the unity of the law, the law *for* religion, the religious law: To love God above all, and to respect your fellow human being and the self as favourites of God. This law affords us with a vantage point from which we can understand the complex of structural laws for creation. This is because the whole world is involved in this respect; my fellow

¹⁰⁸ See his *Inleiding in de Wijsbegeerte* (J.H. Kok, Kampen, 1956) and especially his *Cursus ter inleiding in de Wijsbegeerte der Wetenschap* (Copieërinrichting, v. d. Berg, Kampen).

human being and I are part and parcel of this world; we have one task as well as many other tasks. We can formulate this differently: To stand correctly before God and towards our fellow human beings, we have to realise that the whole world is involved, and that creation can only be understood in its subjectedness to structural laws. We can put it still differently: For respect for my fellow human being and for myself, based on God's injunction to love, I have to see the variety in the world; the world as the home of God becomes known as a complex of aspects subject to a complex of structural laws, structural laws for, for instance, number, chemical things, animals, language, legal matters, and so on. The subjectivity (law-subjectedness) of all of this points towards the unity of the law, but the variety of functioning (behaviour) of everything remains subject to the plurality of structural laws. The creation law also reveals a third aspect, namely the *positive* (positivised) *law*, which is understandable only from the perspective of the human being as office-bearer (and as bearer of authority). And finally,¹⁰⁹ Popma also discusses time as a law-boundary, and the time-law — which I am unable to fit into the preceding outline.

The *creation law* as building plan (as council for creation, the building work of God) seems to me too one-sided and a stretching of the law-idea. I have to leave this to the theologians, however. What strikes me here (in the same way as the structural laws do), is the conflation of order (plan) and law; I would have distinguished between them. We do not agree with the view that the creation law as law *for* the creation does not belong to creation (and is not *of* the creation). We already discussed this point with reference to Vollenhoven. God's law-giving / legislation (as a deed) has to do with God and is not part of creation. The view that the *religious* law is 'pure law', a unitary law, can only be associated with an anthropocentric cosmology. The human being, in our opinion, is indeed the apex of the cosmos, but not its centre. The religious commandment *to love* embraces two laws, of which the second has to be viewed in light of the first. As religious law, it would mostly apply to the unity of humanity, and not to the whole of creation. The other creation laws are only te-al¹¹⁰ laws applicable to what is in an immediate relationship with God, and do not first (need to) find their unity in the religious love-commandment. The structures are indeed subject to a structural law, but this law can be transgressed, for example, in the structure of a despotic totalitarian state that

¹⁰⁹ In his *Cursus* mentioned above.

¹¹⁰ See footnote 103. The love-law is also a te-al law; as a religious law in a unique sense it only applies to human beings.

transgresses the structural law for the state (contained in the creation-order). We can refer here to the criticism of P.G.W. du Plessis¹¹¹ with respect to equating the core meaning (the essence of an aspect or modality) with its (structural) law, about which more later. Particularly significant is the connection that Popma sees between office and the positivising of the law. At any rate, these critical remarks underscore the fact that the creation idea encompasses the law-idea as well.

vi. Van Riessen correctly remarked (with respect to my view that *Dooyeweerd* acquired his philosophical ground-idea, the law-idea, by means of the transcendental method) that Dooyeweerd's law-idea found its origin in the (pre-scientific) faith-knowledge provided by God's Word. I only intended to say that his argument, namely that a law-idea functions as ground-idea in all philosophical systems, makes use of the transcendental method.

Let me put it clearly: It is obvious that all Calvinistic philosophers accept revelation, law and creation the way they are pre-scientifically revealed in God's Word, and that the particular ground-idea of the cosmos (the revelation-, law- and creation-ideas) find their origins there. The problem that we are dealing with here is: which of these three aspects (revelation, law and creation — accepted by all) should be regarded as the most encompassing and therefore the actual ground-idea of Calvinistic Philosophy? We have to take into account that God's Word is no scientific textbook, and that it does not provide any scientific terms and formulations; in other words, we have to philosophically delineate (within the clear boundaries of scientific possibilities) these ideas (in our opinion) as boundary ideas in interaction with Theology. But there is still something else. In the light of God's Word, we have to see and discover the revelatory, law-determined and creaturely nature of the cosmos in the cosmos itself. With such findings and conclusions based on them, we approximate further grounding and delineation of each of the ideas. For this grounding and delineation of the ground-idea as creation (elicited from the perceived in-self-sufficiency and law-subjectedness of the cosmos, with its inclination to point towards God) I apply the diafanerotic method¹¹², and Dooyeweerd the transcendental method (e.g. in his criticism of thought and of philosophical systems, as well as in his philosophical grounding of the law-idea as ground-idea). This does not

¹¹¹ In his *Opskorting van die Etiiese* (Pro Rege-Pers, Potchefstroom, 1965).

¹¹² See my article on *Die Sedelike in Oorsprong en Rigting* (henceforth O. en R.) Volume I.

contradict the fact that Dooyeweerd's conception of the law, and my conception of the creation, both find their origins in our pre-scientific faith in God's Word revelation.

I shall not enter into any detail about Dooyeweerd's law-idea, but will rather delve into his reply to my criticism on it, and his criticism of my creation idea.

Dooyeweerd reacted with the following replies with respect to my objection about the law-idea being narrower than the creation idea because creation encompasses both the law, the cosmic 'things' and 'events' (in other words, idions) that are subject to the law, and that for this reason, the name of our Calvinistic Philosophy should rather be *Philosophy of the Creation Idea* than *Philosophy of the Law-idea*¹¹³.

i. In focusing on the ground-questions (the preliminary questions) of philosophical thought (*sic*) we have to understand the ground-idea in such a way that it can serve as the inevitable pre-condition for *each philosophical system* (Dooyeweerd's emphasis). (The Christian-religious delineation of the ground-idea follows only after that.) We find a law-idea at the foundation of every philosophical system, and not a creation idea. Dooyeweerd reaches this conclusion by way of a transcendental-critical examination of philosophical systems. *In opposing this view*, I would in the first place reply that not all Philosophies presuppose a law-idea, and then accordingly construct the rest of the particular system on it, such as we commonly find in Existentialist Philosophy. In the second place, the Christian character of our Philosophy should be visible exactly in its ground-idea, which is the case with the creation idea as ground-idea, whereas the law-idea (as ground-idea) is not specifically Christian because (according to Dooyeweerd) it is the ground-idea of all philosophical systems. We can say about this: A philosophical system gets its *name* from its ground-idea. For instance, the materialist sees everything as out of, through and to matter; that matter is law-fully arranged, is something that is then added as a further qualification. The name of a philosophical system (as

¹¹³ In my *Die nuwere Wysbegeerte aan die Vrije Universiteit* (Van Schaik, 1933) and my *Die Wysbegeerte van die Skeppingsidee* (De Bussy, 1933), I stated that our Calvinistic Philosophy should be called the *Philosophy of the Creation Idea* (and not the *Philosophy of the Law-idea or Cosmonomic Idea*). Dooyeweerd reacted to this in his *De Wijsbegeerte der Wetwetidee* (Volume I, p. 57-62; H.J. Paris, Amsterdam 1935) and in his translation of this publication, entitled *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought* (Vol. I, bl. 93-96; H.J. Paris, Amsterdam, 1953). I find it interesting that Ph. Kohnstamm stated, after his shift to the *Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea* that "I associate myself with Stoker's objections to the *name*, objections that Dooyeweerd in my opinion could not totally refute. I agree with Stoker that the Philosophy of the Creation Idea, or even better, the Creation Philosophy, succeeds far better in expressing to the uninformed outsider the fundamental difference between what is meant here and all other extra-Biblical philosophies" (*Paedagogiek, Personalisme en Wijsbegeerte der Wetwetidee*, article in *Feestbundel — Doctor Jan Waterink* (p. 101, Amsterdam 1951).

determined by its ground-idea) is, being a name, a linguistic sign of distinction. The name '*Philosophy of the Creation Idea*' (this cosmos as creation out of, through and to God) distinguishes our Philosophy from all others, whereas with the name *Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea* does not distinguish our Philosophy from the others, because the latter also (according to Dooyeweerd) are Philosophies of the Law-idea / Cosmonomic Idea. It stands to reason that the *Philosophy of the Creation Idea* also has the task and duty of examining the cosmic order of creation, but then only as the order for the created / the creaturely.

ii. The creation idea is inadequate to serve as ground-idea of Christian Philosophy because its content should reflect the Scriptural, religious ground-motive of creation, fall into sin and redemption (whereas the creation idea only mentions creation — H.G.S.). *In opposition to this*, it can be said that exactly the same objection would count against the law-idea as ground-idea. Furthermore, the creation idea answers the question what this world *is* that we are living in and to which we belong; and closer examination of this very creation, we discover 'in Your light', fall into sin and evil, and with the redemptive death of Christ in creation also in principle redemption and recreation. It is this very creation that was created 'good', that fell into sin and evil, and will also be delivered and recreated. These are all further qualifications of the cosmos as creation as it currently exists, as Philosophy examines it in its totality and coherent radical diversity.

iii. It counts in favour of the *law idea* that in its focus on the origin and meaning of the law and on its relationship with the subjectivity (in other words, that which is subject to the law — H.G.S.), it acknowledges right from the beginning the *boundary* character of the philosophical ground-idea, and also presents us with a criterion, flowing from its critical focus on the preliminary questions ('voorvragen') about the law (the cosmic order) and its subject. It presents us with a fundamental distinction between different viewpoints and approaches in Philosophy; not only between Christian Philosophy (which, as true transcendental Philosophy respects the immanent cosmic boundaries) and the non-Christian Philosophy (which, as Immanence-Philosophy and therefore speculative metaphysics, are inclined to transcend the boundaries), but also within the Immanence Philosophy itself. Rationalism absolutizes nature and ethical laws and, for example, whereas Irrationalism reduces the law to a subordinate function of individual creative subjectivity. Van Riessen places himself on the side of Dooyeweerd in the discussion of

this matter between Dooyeweerd en me¹¹⁴, and calls this reply of Dooyeweerd's to my objections, a decisive argument, and then says that the creation idea does not contain anything in this respect that can be regarded as specifically philosophical. *In opposing this view*, I would firstly like to state (as I have already done elsewhere) that, in fundamental sense, delimitation (setting boundaries) should be viewed as a negative stipulation ('this boundary may not be transgressed'), that one should rather begin with a positive stipulation or distinction, and use that as a point of departure for understanding the boundary as limit. Secondly, the distinction between God, the totally self-sufficient, the absolute, totally wise, totally good, omnipotent and sovereign Creator, and the totally in-self-sufficient creaturely cosmos, depending in everything on God and determined by God's ontic order, in other words, the cosmos as creation, is a positive distinction between both of them. A negative limitation flows from this perspective: the cosmos (matter, plant, animal and human being) cannot transcend its in-self-sufficient and law-subjected creatureliness; and God is not creaturely in any sense. This perspective allows us to distinguish just as keenly between a Calvinistic Philosophy that respects the *creatureliness* of the cosmos as a totality and its radical diversity, and other Philosophies that regard the cosmos or something in the cosmos as independent and in opposition to God, in the process absolutising it; but also *between* un-Christian Philosophies, of which one for example sees reason (Rationalism) and others something else as independent, or absolutises it. Let me put this clearly: Dooyeweerd correctly says that rationalists absolutise the law of reason; I would add that they also absolutise reason itself; the creation idea does justice to both forms of absolutisation (in their mutual correlational complementation); the law-criterion only does justice to one of them. By means of the creation idea, we can likewise illustrate materialists' absolutising of both matter and the matter-law (in their mutual connectedness), whereas the law-criterion only draws attention to their absolutising of the matter-law.

iv. There is no dimension in philosophical thinking in which the law-idea does not exert its central *a priori* influence; the law-idea prevents Philosophy in its *universal scientific task* (Dooyeweerd's emphasis — H.G.S.) from sliding down the trajectories of the special disciplines that each concentrates on its particular 'meaning-particularity' (particular field of investigation — H.G.S.), as well as from falling back into pre-scientific thinking associated with naïve experience. (Dooyeweerd dropped this argument in the English translation of his main work.) *In opposing this view*, it has to be said that since

¹¹⁴ See footnote 97.

Philosophy has the totality of created cosmos with its coherent radical diversity as its field of investigation, it cannot, given this mandate, slide down the trajectories of the special disciplines. Regarding falling back into pre-scientific thinking (I would rather say ‘knowing’) associated with naïve experience, the philosopher should with his or her findings and conclusions constantly return to the ‘given’ (the idions) of ‘naïve experience’ for testing them; he or she may never relinquish the connection with ‘naïve experience’, despite the extent that they might differ from each other. The fact that Dooyeweerd seems to accept such a radical antithesis (dare I say ‘breach’?) between theoretical (i.e. scientific) and naïve experience, can be blamed on the priority that he assigns in his theory of knowing (Epistemology) to the transcendental-critical method (including his *Gegenstand* theory), whereas the fact that I refrain from doing so can be ascribed to the priority that I assign in the theory of knowing (Epistemology) to the fanerotic method.

v. It might appear, from a linguistic point of view, as if the law-idea only refers to the law-side of reality (in its ‘meaning-totality, meaning-diversity and meaning-coherence’). However, the law-idea positions itself just as well with respect to the *subject-side* of reality, because of the fact that the law only has meaning in its unbreakable correlation with the subject (that which is subject to the law — H.G.S.). The law-idea *implies* (my emphasis — H.G.S.) the subject-idea, that points, in the ground-relationship between ‘meaning-totality, meaning-diversity and meaning-coherence’, to the subject-side of reality. *To refute this view*, I would say that this argument counts less in favour of Dooyeweerd’s law-idea than it counts in favour of my creation-idea. This is a point of decisive criticism against Dooyeweerd because he accepts that the law-side of reality is irreducible to its subject-side, and the subject-side is irreducible to its law-side. The ground-idea of our Philosophy should, however, *immediately (and not only by implication)* do justice to both the law- and the subject-sides; the creation-idea succeeds in doing so; the law-idea does not. Van Riessen says in this respect that I actually allow the law to be partially lost or dissolved in ‘the subjects’. I deny this. The cosmic idions (‘the subjects’ according to the *Philosophy of the Cosmocentric Idea*) and the ontic order that applies to all the idions, should each be recognised in its own right (and in their mutually inseparable connectedness). Love is something different from the love-law; they are mutually irreducible; however, they are not separable; love is subject to the love law (the love norm); an individual might transgress the love norm but the norm for loving continues to apply. I can of course philosophically examine the love-*law* (keeping in mind that it is the law that applies to love) or I can philosophically examine *love* (bearing in

mind that the love-law applies to love). Both of them (mutually complementing) approaches are not only philosophically justifiable but also necessary. The same applies when, for example, one examines the *fundamental nature* or ‘being’ (what the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea refers to as the ‘core meaning’) of space, the biotic (‘life’), the psychic, language, art, economy, law / the juridical, and so on, as well as respectively the *law* for space, the biotic, the psychic, language, art, economy, law / the juridical, and so on. One should take care not to conflate the fundamental nature (‘core meaning’) of, and the particular law applying to, a (modal) idion, in other words, the subject and its law. It is in fact Van Riessen who runs the risk of allowing the subjects to be partially lost or dissolved in the law. He is only aware of the law determining the subject and that “then in the case of science and philosophy, the subjects can only be known from the laws applying to them.”

vi. Dooyeweerd now tells us that he does not object to choosing a term for the ground-idea of Philosophy *that can embrace both the law-side and the subject-side at once*, such as “meaning-idea”, “cosmos-Idea” “world-idea”, “Transcendental Ground-idea” or “Transcendental Basic Idea”¹¹⁵ (this is what matters after all — H.G.S.), but that such terms lack the critical keenness that goads the philosophical thinker into self-reflection regarding his or her attitude with respect to the ‘meaning-totality and meaning-diversity’ of this world, with reference to both the *law-* and (take note: and) the *subject-side*, and also, that they lack the keen focus of the *boundaries or limitations* of philosophical reflection. *In opposition to this view*, I would say that the creation idea (that embraces both *law* and ‘the subjects’) indeed does not lack the required critical keenness and the sharp focus on the boundaries / limitations of philosophical inquiry, as already explained in previous sections.

vii. Dooyeweerd’s final argument is that he prefers to use the term ‘law-idea’ for the reasons mentioned above, a term that has in the meantime become standardised in the Netherlands (for this nuance of Calvinistic Philosophy — H.G.S.). He also says that he does not attach any great value to a discussion about the name. *In response*, I would say that I acknowledge the fact that the name *Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea* has become standardised in the Netherlands — and elsewhere. In my opinion, it counts in the favour of this name that it is quite the correct one for this particular nuance of Calvinistic Philosophy insofar as the *law-idea* can be accepted as *the* philosophical

¹¹⁵ Why does Dooyeweerd not also mention “Creation idea” among these names?

ground-idea. But this then also gives the right to another nuance of our Calvinistic Philosophy, one that for instance propounds either the *revelation idea* or the *creation idea* as the philosophical ground-idea, to respectively use the name *Philosophy of the Revelation Idea* or the name *Philosophy of the Creation Idea*. All of this implies that there is much more at stake here than merely choosing a name. And we have to keep in mind that we have been dealing here only with nuances of our commonly held Calvinistic Philosophy, a circumstance that compels us to participate in maximal mutual cooperation as well as in a mutual struggle about our differences.

With reference to this last argument of Dooyeweerd's, Van Riessen^{115a} says that more than a name is at stake here for Dooyeweerd, because on the one hand, Dooyeweerd wishes to use the name "Philosophy of the Law-Idea (Cosmonomic Idea)" for specifically his Christian Philosophy (Dooyeweerd does not really wish to call his philosophy Calvinistic Philosophy), but on the other hand he strives at establishing the law-idea / cosmonomic idea, via the method of transcendental criticism (and as a basis of discussion with dissenters), as the ground-idea (as the "common denominator of thought") of Philosophy. Van Riessen is convinced that Dooyeweerd is vacillating between two ideas, and that the demands made by transcendental criticism (with respect to the ground-idea) have begun to gain the upper hand.

Whatever the case, the *Philosophy of the Creation Idea* maintains that the philosophical ground-idea of the cosmos as cosmos offers more than either that of revelation or that of law, and that it in fact embraces both of them (revelation and law). The name *Philosophy of the Creation Idea* is also a suitable lingual distinctive signification¹¹⁶. It encouraged me that Philip Kohnstamm, after his shift to the *Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea*, also preferred the name that I had suggested, viz. *Philosophy of the Creation Idea*¹¹⁷, as referred to by Dooyeweerd.

Our reply to the question regarding the totality of the cosmos in its primary sense is that it is a creation of God (both in its totality and in all its 'parts'). [\[Back to Contents\]](#)

^{115a} See footnote 97.

¹¹⁶ Non-Christian or cosmocentric Philosophy (see footnote 81) will not use this name for their particular Philosophies.

¹¹⁷ See footnote 113.

3. *Being and Meaning*

Despite the fact that Dooyeweerd chose the ‘law idea’ as philosophical ground-idea, he still allows for the possibility that the ground-idea could be a ‘meaning idea’. This is because meaning in his opinion is the creaturely mode / way of being under the law. In response to the question what the cosmos as cosmos is, Dooyeweerd replies: meaning¹¹⁸. He also places it in opposition to the *Being* of God, the very self-sufficient Archē from Whom, through Whom and to Whom all things are. The fact that the entire cosmos points to the Archē and expresses it marks the creaturely reality in its dependent and in-self-sufficient way of being as meaningful. Meaning points beyond and above itself to its absolute and self-sufficient Origin Who in Himself is not meaning anymore. The Archē as Being transcends all meaning. In this sense (meaning) of ‘meaning’, Dooyeweerd refers to meaning totality, meaning diversity, the meaning side, meaning function, meaning kernel / core meaning, and so on.

In opposing this view I hold the position that the creation (*in casu* the cosmos) *is* not meaning, but rather *has* meaning, and that Dooyeweerd’s view that creation (*in casu* the cosmos) *is meaning*, runs the risk of lapsing into meaning-idealism¹¹⁹, in which case he does not necessarily absolutise meaning but stretches meaning in the sense of deeming the cosmos to consist of meaning only. Dooyeweerd’s response to this criticism¹²⁰ creates the impression that we merely differ about terminology. What I call creation or creatureliness, he refers to as meaning, and that I can support what he says of meaning by merely replacing the word ‘meaning’ with the word ‘creation’ (or ‘creatureliness’)^{120a}. Whether this is the case or not, I find it a cause of concern that he uses the theoretically pluralistic and philosophically overcharged term ‘meaning’ instead of the word ‘creation’ which is so gloriously Biblical. The difference between us is more than terminological, however.

¹¹⁸ I am referring to the works of Dooyeweerd mentioned in footnote 113. See about the being of God and the cosmos as meaning (Dutch) *Volume I*, p. 6 ff, 10-13, 62 ff.; (English) *Volume I*, p. 4 ff, 10 ff and 96-97; (Dutch) *Volume II*, p. 22-34; (English) *Volume II*, p. 25-36; (Dutch) *Volume III*, p. 42-53; (English) *Volume III*, p. 61-67. Dooyeweerd’s reply to my criticism that the cosmos is not in itself meaning but rather has meaning can be found in (Dutch) *Volume I*, p. 62, (English) *Volume I*, p. 96-97; (Dutch) *Volume II*, p. 27-30; (English) *Volume II*, p. 30-32; (Dutch) *Volume III*, p. 42-53; (English) *Volume III*, p. 61-76.

¹¹⁹ Cf. footnotes 113 and 118.

¹²⁰ See footnote 118.

^{120a} I could have spoken of creaturely or created totality, -versatility, -fulness, -specialisation, -side, -nature, -modality, -function, -structure, and so on.

I am hesitant about the use of the word ‘meaning’ here. Also the word ‘being’ is philosophically pluralistic and theoretically overtaxed, and in the final analysis a name for an abstract concept. Anyway, when I use the word ‘being’, then not only God, but also creation is ‘being’; God is the absolute, totally self-sufficient Being, and the creation (*in casu* cosmos) totally dependent on God, creaturely being, subject to God’s law-order and pointing beyond itself to God’s Being — a ‘being’ that is not meaning in itself, but possesses meaning. And furthermore, when I think of creation (cosmos) as having meaning, I distinguish between the meaning and the actual existence of the cosmos, a distinction that Dooyeweerd does not make, and in terms of which I assign a narrower meaning to meaning than he. I will now try to explain this.

Outside in my garden near my study is an apricot tree. *a.* The *apricot tree* (is, it exists); *b.* (*The apricot tree*) *is, it exists.* *a.* I can look at it and see that it is indeed an *apricot tree* that is, that exists. *b.* I can also see that an apricot tree *is, exists* at this moment *right here* in my garden. Statement *a.* draws my attention to the *meaning* of the apricot tree, whereas statement *b.* draws it to the *now-here-existence* of the apricot tree. My question as to *what* an apricot tree is, is an inquiry about its meaning, and I can expect to receive a reply that it is a kind of fruit tree that partakes in the arithmetic, spatial, ‘physical’ and biotic modal conditions, and that it has its own particular idiosyncratic structure (‘individuality structure’). But if I rivet my attention to the fact *that* the tree *is, exists* right now here in my garden — then of course I do not inquire about its meaning, in other words try to discover what exactly an apricot tree is. *Both of them*, meaning as well as the actual now and here ‘is’ or existence of the apricot tree, are in-self-sufficient, creaturely, subject to God’s law-order, and in their creatureliness point beyond themselves to their Origin, to God. The creaturely ‘being’ of the tree also encompasses (in unbreakable and mutual inseparable connectedness) its meaning as well as its actual here-and-now existence; the being of the tree is not being only, but it also has meaning; the tree does not only exist with its being, it also has meaning. That is all. In other words (this in response to Dooyeweerd), the ‘being’ of the apricot tree^{120b} is no metaphysical structure behind the meaning of the apricot tree^{120c}, and my distinction here between meaning and actual existence has nothing at all to do with scholastic dualism. Although they are distinguishable (and we have to distinguish between them), we do not separate them. Keep in mind that they are also not reducible to each other. This is clear from the

^{120b} As I understand it.

^{120c} As Dooyeweerd understands me.

fact that I can visually imagine the same tree, that I can form a concept of it, and express it in a word — each of them pertaining to meaning — but in all of these instances the tree does not actually exist like the actual tree here in my garden. The ‘being’ of the tree embraces in an unbreakable coherence both its meaning and its actual existence. If Dooyeweerd preferred to call both meaning, then he should distinguish between meaning (in my more restricted definition of the word) and meaning as actual here-and-now-existence.

When I now philosophically examine the meaning of the apricot tree — I am thinking here of Dooyeweerd’s linden tree — I can point to its modal condition and its ‘individuality structure’, and so on, as well as to the coherence between all of this. I can also be requested to analyse the actual existence (the ‘is’) of the tree. This might embarrass me, causing me to reply (like Augustine with respect to ‘time’): I know what actual ‘existence’ is, but I cannot say it in words — just as I would for instance respond: I know what the colour quality green is, but I am unable to say (especially to a blind person) what it is exactly. One is *mutatis mutandis* placed in similarly embarrassing situations by a vast array of other original or primordial cosmic idions (or boundary problems). But even if I could say nothing more than that the tree possesses meaning, and that it actually exists but that I am unable to analyse it any further, I still would have the duty to maintain and respect the distinction between meaning and actual existence. It is, however, possible to mention more about the actual here-and-now-existence of the tree than only that it exists. I mention the following without entering into any details. The fact that the tree *is* (exists) entails that it *real-ly* exists, in other words, that it is *work-ing* and *dynamic*. The tree in its actual existence also *resists* my *work-ing* or action (I can not look or wish it away or just push it over,¹²¹ I can bump into it in the dark, and so on); I cannot say all of this in the same sense (meaning) about a virtual, imagined thought-out and formulated tree in my mind. And furthermore, the apricot tree *is* (exists) *now* (in my garden). This implies that its actual or real existence is qualified by time (not temporary¹²²); actual existence is not possible without concrete (real) time. And also, the

¹²¹ We acquire our knowledge that something actually exists (see my articles in *Philosophia Reformata* II, 2 and III, 1, and in the *Tydskrif vir Wetenskap en Kuns* (new series) II, 1, from experience of resistance — not only experience of resistance with respect to tendencies, desires (Scheler), or to feeling and touching (Alexander), but also to any dynamic action, wherever the dynamics (the actual, work-ing, energetics) of reality resist my (working, do-ing, dynamic) activity.

¹²² ‘Temporary’ usually means ‘for a time’, ‘transitory / mortal’, and so on. But ‘subject to time’ means that something is determined by time, that it shares in time. Of course, the apricot tree is also ‘temporary’, but this is not the problem we address here.

existence of the tree (now, here in my garden) is *contingent*; the contingency of its actual existence is another *sine qua non*. With this analysis, I am not searching for a metaphysical construction, mysterious powers behind the meaning of the tree; I am merely stating what I am perceiving in this particular situation (in my ‘naïve experience’, if you will) of the tree, namely that it exists here and now, indeed exists, real-ly exists, that it is real (and work-ing), dynamic, offers resistance, exists in time and also exists contingently. In my opinion, this is something different from its meaning (from what the tree is as a fruit tree, in its modal condition and as ‘individuality structure’). One might respond to this by mentioning that the apricot tree shares in the biotic, that it functions biotically (lives, grows, bears fruit); these conditions would of course apply to all apricot trees, and are therefore general (*in casu* modal) conditions. What I am dealing with here, is the concrete here-and-now-actual existence of this particular real tree in my garden. Its ‘being’ might of course share the modal, biotic functions (shared by all trees), but its ‘being’ embraces more: it really exists, it really lives, it really grows, really bears fruit – right here in my garden¹²³. And in terms of its meaning as well as its actual existence (therefore in its entire concrete ‘being’) the tree, in-self-sufficient, creaturely subjected to God’s law-order, points towards its Origin, towards God. Of course, we cannot separate the meaning from its actual existence (we can only distinguish between them); by the same token, we can also not separate the (concrete ‘being’ of the) actual tree right here in my garden from its meaning. This will become clear through the following considerations.

If I compare the actual existence of the tree in my garden with the actual existence of the raindrops that are now falling, or with that of my neighbour’s dog that is now barking, or with that of the student just now walking past my house, then I notice that the actual existence of each of them differs from all the others.

To highlight the differences among them, I would be compelled to refer to the relevant ‘meaning’ in each case. But inversely, for my analysis of ‘meaning’ and ‘being’, I would in each case have to revert to the actual existence (or to what is actually happening); in other words, meaning-becoming, meaning-unfolding, meaning-shifts, and so on, all point towards the real / actual extant (or occurring). We have to take note of the difference however. Meaning-unfolding or meaning-unlocking (in the sense of a modal anticipation) is functional. Actual unfolding (real disclosure) is dynamic and occurs contingently at a

¹²³ We have to take cognisance of the difference between the modal condition: ‘the tree has a life function’, ‘the tree functions biotically’, and the reality indication: ‘this tree lives’.

specific time and in specific concrete circumstances. The difference between actual existence and meaning persists, including when continued meaning analysis of actual existence (events) make use of meaning distinctions. For this reason, the actual creation of an artwork remains an actual event, even if we assert that it is aesthetically determined in modal terms; and the artwork remains modally aesthetical even though we concentrate our attention on its actual existence and on the historical factors that co-determined it^{123a}.

In sum: in my opinion, the tree (in other words, the cosmos) is not meaning, but possesses meaning (in other words, the cosmos has meaning). According to Dooyeweerd, the tree (in other words, the cosmos) is meaning.

The differences between us run much deeper, however. Dooyeweerd correctly says that my statement “that the tree possesses meaning but is not meaning” follows from my view of ‘substance’. He might have misunderstood my concept of ‘substance’ — or rather what I used to refer to¹²⁴ as ‘substance’, but have subsequently referred to as ‘idiostance’ — but my concept of actual existence (or rather an event) and meaning indeed does cohere with my concept of idiostance and its four cosmic dimensions — a view not supported by Dooyeweerd. I shall return to this difference of opinion. (See section III.C.13.b.) [\[Back to Contents\]](#)

C. *The Cosmos*

1. *The cosmos as cosmos*

We see (according to God’s Word revelation as well as in conversations with theologians) the cosmos itself as a creation of God. This external-cosmic vision of the cosmos reveals to us the cosmos as it really and truly is: creaturely, in-self-sufficient, and in everything dependent on God and subject to his ontic order, as well as pointing towards its Origin. Looked at from the side of the cosmos itself, the cosmos reveals to us its creaturely in-self-sufficiency and its subjectedness to the law-order. In other words, the cosmos itself points towards its Origin, God. Being cosmos, the cosmos presupposes an Origin beyond itself and does not exist self-sufficiently in itself (as

^{123a} The historical is no modal function in my opinion. More about this later.

¹²⁴ See my *Die Wysbegeerte van die Skeppingsidee* (De Bussy, 1933). I find it interesting that Dooyeweerd is prepared to guarantee the reality of meaning (for instance, of something concrete) by cosmic time. There is something lacking here – can cosmic time be sufficient guarantee that something really exists? See section III.C.13.b.

incorrectly supposed by many a philosopher). But we should also take care not to relativise this relationship between God and cosmos. Because then we would be inclined to speak of the distinction between God and cosmos in relative terms, such as more or less. Panentheism (the doctrine that everything — including the cosmos — is in God) and Panencosmism (the doctrine that everything — including God — is in the cosmos), for instance, both relativise the distinction between God and cosmos, despite acknowledging God as the higher, and the rest as the lower part (in respectively God or the cosmos). We should also not absolutise the creaturely, in-self-sufficient, law-subjected cosmos as cosmos (as occurs in, for instance, Pantheism, but also in, for instance, materialism, absolute idealism, etc.). But there is also a third possibility along with ‘absolute’ en ‘relative’, *ein Dritter im Bunde*, namely ‘relational’. ‘Relative’ is the relationship between similar or homogeneous fulcrums; ‘relational’ is the relationship between dissimilar or heterogeneous fulcrums. The relationship between God and cosmos is therefore relational. We are dealing with an unequal and irreversible relationality, because God is absolute and self-sufficient, whereas the cosmos is creaturely and in-self-sufficient, and dependent on God for everything. Because, according to God’s Word revelation, we may not relativise the relationship between God and cosmos, and should respect the radical distinction between God (and his ‘Being’) and the cosmos (and its ‘being’), we refer to the creaturely, in-self-sufficient, law-subjected (not independence, but rather) ‘self-stance’ (Afrikaans: “eiestandigheid”) (or ‘own thereness’) of the cosmos¹²⁵. In its ‘self-stance’, the cosmos is radically different and distinguishable from God, characterised by its own (determined by God’s creational will) nature, being and meaning. All of this requires further penetrative and encompassing inquiry — that will have to continue into the distant future, because the issue of the cosmos as cosmos (including its nature and meaning) and its concomitant Origin, origin and boundary issues will remain unfathomable. However, in the meantime, the external-cosmic vision provides us with the insight that the cosmos was created by God and that it points towards the Archê, the Origin, God, in its creaturely, in-self-sufficient law-subjectedness. This vision allows us to see the cosmos as it really and truly is, and prevents us from derailings such as we detect in Philosophies that, for instance and *inter alia*, see the cosmos (or something in the cosmos) as self-sufficient, in the process absolutising it, or relativising or ‘essentially’ wiping out the differences between God and cosmos.

¹²⁵ See footnotes 61, 62 and 90.

According to God's Word revelation, the external-cosmic view helps us to see the cosmos not only according to 'the order of creation', but also according to 'the order of the fall into sin of the human being (as well as the presence of evil in the cosmos), and the redemption of the human being (as well as the recreation)' in Christ. Keep in mind, however — in our philosophical examination of the cosmos as cosmos — that the external-cosmic vision according to 'the order of creation' should precede 'the order of sin and evil, and of redemption and recreation'.

With the aid of the external-cosmic vision of the cosmos as creation we now have to examine the cosmos from the inside out (internal-cosmic). For such an internal-cosmic investigation, it seems to me essential for us to repeatedly commence with the concrete reality, to constantly bear in mind the connection with the concrete, and verify the results of our investigations by referring back to the concrete reality¹²⁶. [\[Back to Contents\]](#)

2. *Hapantic Qualifications*

- a. Hapantic qualifications should be distinguished from cosmic dimensions (about which more later). Hapantic qualifications pertain to the cosmos in its entirety. Greek: *hapas* (all together) is a strong form of *pas* (each). Cosmic dimensions pertain to the whole of the cosmos from a particular side or perspective; hapantic qualifications have to do with the entire cosmos.
- b. If we allow our eye to roam over the cosmos, we will perceive¹²⁷, or encounter: a large number of idions¹²⁸ among which (in alphabetical order) actions, apples, chairs, colours, emotions, gnats, human beings, movements, sounds, states, thoughts, wishes, words, and so on. (The circumstance) *that* the cosmos consists of idions is a hapantic qualification.
- c. The cosmos consists of a plurality of idions. We do not mean here the abstract concept 'plurality', but that we find in the cosmos this and this and this ... and that and that and that. Plurality (as intended here) is another hapantic qualification of the cosmos. The problem of plurality has already been meticulously researched. It involves theories such as quantitative monism, plurality and pluralism, as well as (in a specific

¹²⁶ This is hardly possible in terms of Dooyeweerd's epistemological doctrine of 'Gegenstand'. See my article on *Die kosmiese dimensie van gebeurtenisse* in this vol II of O EN R. Also H. van Riessen does not accept Dooyeweerd's view of 'Gegenstand'.

¹²⁷ See footnote 94.

¹²⁸ See footnote 9.

context) the problems of the origin of plurality, of discreteness and of the *principium individuationis*. A plurality of (these) idions and a plurality of (those) idions can be distinguished; and this particular plurality can be understood as quantity (a number, collection); and this again makes us think of numbers¹²⁹. But enough of this.

d. When we examine the entire cosmos, and begin comparing the idions, we notice the presence of another, more complicated qualification, namely that of *diversity*. The diversity (of idions) may be relative, qualitative or radical. Space is something different from time; green is something different from blue; a colour is something different from a sound; grass is something different from a tree; a plant is something different from an animal; emotion is something different from a thought; art is something different from science; church is something different from state; development is something different from history, and so on. Also in the case of diversity, we should not conceive it abstractly, but rather that we find in the cosmos different (distinctive; distinguishable) idions. Diversity embraces differentness as well as sameness (not identity). Diversity is also a hapantic qualification of the cosmos. It is a more complex hapantic qualification than plurality, because diversity presupposes plurality or — we could say — diversity is founded in plurality¹³⁰. This problem has also enjoyed close attention in Philosophy, among others, in the contexts of problems pertaining to the nature, origin, kinds and types of diversity; the problem of sameness and difference; identity and diversity; and together with all of this, theories in connection with qualitative monisms, plurality and pluralism as well as (in specific context) the problem of the *principium individualisationis*^{130a}.

e. Another glance at the cosmos reveals that no idion exists in isolation from all the others, but rather that the many and respective idions cohere (in a multitude of relationships with one another, connected to one another in a great variety of intertwinements). Everything coheres with all else. This coherence of idions is another hapantic qualification of the cosmos, and is more complex than the previous two because coherence presupposes the plurality of the respective idions that cohere. This has also been closely examined by Philosophy. In this process, problems regarding the nature, origin, types and kinds of coherence were addressed together with the problem

¹²⁹ See my *B. en M.*

¹³⁰ See my *B. en M.*

^{130a} See my article *Individualisasie en generalisasie* in the *Kristelike Skoolblad* (April 1926).

of relative and relational relationships. Especially interesting here is, among others, the doctrine that regards relationships as autonomous / independent, namely relativism.

f. Another look at the cosmos with its many and respective idions together with their coherence reveals to us the *structures* of the various idions. Structure is a particular form of coherence. A colour forms a structural unity of for instance intensity, quality, spatial extensity, and so on; a book of spatial format, weight / mass, paper, content that can be read and understood, etc.; a chemical reaction has a particular (and particularly, a dynamic) structure; the structure of a marriage differs from that of the state; an historical event has a specific structure, et cetera. Everything, the entire cosmos, is structured. Structure is also a hapantic qualification of the cosmos. The hapantic qualification of structure is more complex than the previous qualifications because it presupposes their presence. Philosophy has in the past also made intensive and extensive inquiries into structure, in the process addressing problems regarding the nature, origin, types and kinds of structure, as well as of structural change, structural shift, structural disintegration, and so on. Do we have to refer to all the theories such as structuralism, holism, gestaltism, and so on?

g. Another examination of the cosmos with its multitude of respective, coherent and structured idions, and specifically of the order given together with all of these, the fundamental order of the structuring, allows us to detect the *law*, the *law-order*. This is, in my opinion, another hapantic qualification of the cosmos. We should not equate structure and law. There is something like a structural law. The structure of the moon and the structure of the movement of the moon around the earth are subject respectively to specific physical-chemical and physical laws. A moral / ethical and an immoral / unethical deed both have a particular structure, but the moral / ethical law is something altogether different. Language has a complex structure; the linguistic law of 'clarity' is something different from language itself. Law is a valid qualification for order¹³¹; the law applies, structures *are* (e.g. 'exist'), but do not apply like laws. A structure can disintegrate and collapse (cf. e.g. the death of an organism, or for example divorce or the collapse of a state, and so on). The same can hardly be said of the law that applies to a structure.

¹³¹ See my *B. en M.*

h. We have now distinguished between the existence (the: ‘thereness’) of idions as well as multitude, diversity, coherence, structure, and law as hapantic qualifications of the cosmos. There may be more.

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3. *Idiostance*^{131a}

a. The key to the philosophical understanding of the cosmos, namely the ground-idea of Philosophy, is that the cosmos as cosmos (as a totality in all its different components and aspects) is a creation of God that cannot exist on its own (independently), but depends in its creaturely, in-self-sufficient and law-determined ‘own-stance’ / ‘selfstandingness’ for everything on its Origin and in doing so, points beyond itself to its Origin. Our intern-cosmic survey also revealed that a multitude, a variety of coherent, structurally determined and structurally connected law-subjected idions exist. The hapantic qualifications that we mentioned above may give the impression that with this internal-cosmic overview we are indeed dealing with a limited number of hapantic qualifications. But despite this, we find ourselves confronted with a multitude and diversity of coherent, structured and law-determined idions that we find staggering exactly because of its unbelievable multitude and diversity. What can we do with it? Can we find distinctions and arrangements of idions that would help us create a less intimidating overview of the cosmos? Let us begin by calling the survey offered by the hapantic qualifications a ‘formal’ internal-cosmic overview of the cosmos. Is it also possible to do a ‘material’^{131b} survey of the cosmos that would give us a more manageable view of the formidable plurality and diversity of (coherent, structurally determined and law-subjected) idions? This will only be possible if we could detect distinctions among the idions that would result in a surveyable arrangement.

a. This stone (an idion) is b. spatially extensive (an idion), it moves (an idion), has weight / mass (an idion), is blue (an idion), and so on. a. This rose (an idion), b. is spatial (an idion), physical-chemical (an idion), lives (an idion), grows (an idion), is red (an idion), is beautiful (an idion), and so on. a. This dog (an idion), b. lives (an idion), barks (an idion), runs (an idion), is intelligent (an idion), and so on. a. This human being (an idion), b. has

^{131a} See my *B. en M.*

^{131b} For the distinction between ‘formal’ and ‘material’ unity see the article on *Die beginsel: Eenheid en Differensiasie* in vol II of *O EN R*, as well as SAAR.

a body (an idion), enjoys (an idion), thinks (an idion), speaks (an idion), buys (an idion), loves (an idion), wills (an idion), marries (an idion), governs (an idion), and so on.

An examination of the idions mentioned under *b* reveals that they all respectively pertain to the idions mentioned under *a*. We therefore call them *appertaining idions*¹³². We cannot, however, say the same of the idions mentioned under *a*, i.e. that they belong or pertain to other idions since each of them constitutes its own compact (but not isolated¹³³) whole, each has a compact (not independence but rather) ‘own stance / own thereness’. We call them idiostances¹³⁴. This distinction between idiostances (idiostant / compact idions) and idions that belong or pertain to idiostances (appertaining idions), now offers us the ‘material’ survey of the cosmos for which we have been searching; the cosmos, it seems, can be surveyed because of this distinction. It enables us (up to now) to distinguish between four types of concrete existing idionstances, namely *matter* (for example, this stone or this drop of water), (a) *plant*, (an) *animal* and (a) *human being*. Based on this distinction, these are sometimes referred to as the domains / realms of matter, plants, animals and human beings.

The distinction between and coherence of idiostances and appertaining idions deserves intensive, extensive and penetrating examination. We will not enter into that now. The point here is that the distinction between idiostances and the appertaining idions have to be sharply in our focus. It has become clear that, in our philosophical investigations (for the purpose of detecting the ground-idea of the cosmos as creation, as well as the hapantic qualifications of the cosmos), we first have to take cognisance of the idiostances and then only may we move on to an examination of the appertaining idions. As far as the idiostances are concerned, we may conclude that the entire cosmos consists of idiostances and their mutual coherences.

Concerning idiostances (we will return to this point every now and then), we should see them as concrete, compact, self-standing wholes, in mutual diversity, as well as in their mutual coherences (relationships, intertwinements, influences and so on). We can do so only in broad outlines at this stage. Going any further and deeper into it will involve also the appertaining idions belonging to each idiostance, and this can only happen once we

¹³² Appertaining idions are not characteristics only.

¹³³ The distinction between isolated and complete is of fundamental significance. See my article in SAAR.

¹³⁴ I previously used the term ‘substances’ for ‘idiostances’. I return to this point later.

have discovered the main (or rather, the universal) distinctions among the appertaining idions as well.

b. The question remains whether there are only the four idiostances that we mentioned. There may be more.

i. The first question is whether we should not understand ‘energy’ as idiostance. Force / power and energy are sometimes used as synonyms, but they are not the same thing. Force / power is the dynamic suitability of an idiostance to work, to accomplish something. This is why we refer to, for instance, willpower, vitality as a force, and so on. Force / power is an appertaining idion and not an idiostance. If, however, we distinguish between different forms of energy — we limit this discussion to physical energy, such as electricity, magnetism, light, heat and so on — and also bear in mind that one can be converted to the other or change into the other, we will conclude that energy is something different from force / power. Energy can be physically circumscribed as a store of labour or a possibility to labour. Energy is today seen as essentially a dynamic characteristic of matter, to the extent that some are convinced that matter can be fully converted to energy. But despite this, mass is circumscribed as ‘that’ which offers resistance to change in movement, and physicists are unable to tell us what this ‘that’ in fact is. It appears as if energy cannot work without matter (material particles). We find ourselves confronted here with intriguing problems regarding matter and energy, such as quantum phenomena and the doctrine of the dual nature of light (as particles and as waves). Also keep in mind that matter (e.g. an atom, a molecule and a stone) possesses structures that cannot be found in energy. This opens the possibility that matter cannot be totally converted into energy. The last word about matter and energy has not yet been spoken. It is our contention that we have to distinguish between them, but allow for the possibility that they are ‘essentially’ connected in such a manner that we can hardly refer to them as two idiostances, namely matter and energy. We therefore regard matter (in its ‘essential’ connectedness and determinedness by energy) as an idiostance, but do not regard energy as an idiostance that can be distinguished from matter. This view will be substantiated (later) in our examination of the cosmic-dimensional condition of idiostances.

ii. Can there possibly be an intermediate idiostance between *matter* (such as an actual water drop) *and a plant* (or even a living cell) that cannot be regarded as either matter or

plant (or a cell)? This has not yet been convincingly proved. A virus, for instance, appears to be a living organism.

iii. Although it is difficult with respect to the simplest types to determine whether we are dealing with a plant or an animal, the existence of an intermediary idiostance *that is neither plant nor animal* has not yet been convincingly indicated.

iv. Although — with respect to animal and human being — mention has been made of apes, hominoids, hominids and human beings, also in this case the existence of an intermediary idiostance that is *neither animal nor human being* has not yet been proved.

In other words, we have to allow for the possibility that there might be more idiostances than only *matter* (e.g. a stone), a *plant*, an *animal* and a *human being*. In the meantime, we will limit our investigations only to these four idiostances.

The first question to address is whether these idiostances are radically distinctive from one another, in other words ‘essentially’ different from, and irreducible to, one another. Further investigation answers this question in the affirmative. The four idiostances are radically distinctive.

c. That brings us to the matter of their origin. We are confronted here with — as far as I can see — four possibilities, which I will mention but not critique in full.

(a) The radical (or ‘essential’) difference between the idiostances could be relativized or denied; it could be maintained that for instance one of them (in the sequence of matter, plant, animal up to the human being) has developed spontaneously out of the others. The indicable radical diversity among the idiostances excludes in my opinion this possible reply to the problem of origin.

(b) The idiostances — with and in their radical ('essential', mutually irreducible) distinctions — find their origins in the creation-will of God; they were in other words, created in their radical distinctions (how exactly we cannot know) by God as part of creation. The following two possibilities are located somewhere in between these two extremes.

(c) The idiostances are radically distinctive, but have developed (in the sequence of matter, plant, animal and human being) in creative-evolutionary fashion. This ‘irrational’ view confers on the nature (rather the cosmos) self-sufficient creative (in other words, divine) powers. According to our philosophical ground-idea — nature (or cosmos) is not

self-sufficient — and according to our pre-scientific suppositions as well as in the light of God's Word that there is a radical diversity in the cosmos that finds its origin in God — this reply to the question as to origins can hardly be accepted.

(d) We have to maintain both the radical diversity and the universal ('general') genetic connection (ranging from matter to human being). Although (d.i) the radical diversity might have its origin in God, God is also involved in the entire creative evolutionary process in a leading capacity¹³⁵, or (d.ii.) a divine factor (a 'directing power'¹³⁶) is active in the creative-evolutionary process (from matter to human being) that guides the process of evolution by regularly introducing into every evolutionary phase (the latest or the higher that follows from the previous or the lower) certain necessary anti-possibilities or anti-chances. We can eliminate (d.ii) because in essence the 'directing power' is nothing more than a natural-scientific hypothesis referring — after all — to a natural (or cosmic) force / power that performs divine miracles. Our basic choice is therefore in fact between possibilities (b) and (d.i).

Firstly, the answers to the question as to the origin of idiosyncrasies are not isolated from pre-scientific (including life- and world view) presuppositions. The answers that (a), (c) and (d.ii) offer us are preceded (*a priori*) by (among others) the statement "that nature must be wholly explicable by nature alone" — a faith statement that is religious in essence (though not in the restricted sense of 'pious') and urges the scholar in question to first (in some cases, implicitly) accept the doctrine of universal (or 'general') evolution from matter to the human being; whereas answers (b) and (d.i.) are preceded by the supposition of a created radical diversity by God. Secondly, the answers to questions with respect to the origin of idiosyncrasies are not exclusively biological in nature, since Theology, Philosophy and the diverse special sciences / disciplines¹³⁷ each has — in accordance with its own particular field of inquiry — a relevant interest in them¹³⁸. All the

¹³⁵ See J. Lever: *Creatie en Evolutie* (Zomer en Keuning, 1956).

¹³⁶ See among others R. Broom: *Evolution —Design or Accident?* in *Our Changing Worldview* (University of the Witwatersrand Press, 1932). He has no qualms about calling his "directing power" "god".

¹³⁷ This is evident in evolutionistic philosophical systems, evolutionistic psychology, linguistics, jurisprudence, ethics, anthropology, sociology and other special sciences / disciplines, in contrast to philosophical and the diverse special science systems that reject the notion of universal evolution (including the animal ancestry of the human being).

¹³⁸ We take only one example: he or she who has grasped the essential or radical difference between human language and so-called 'animal language', will immediately also realise that human language could not at all have had its origins in so-called animal language and developed out of it. The linguist (likewise the theologian, the philosopher and other scholar) — and not only

related disciplines (in other words, inter-scientifically or inter-disciplinarily) should approach the problem jointly and cooperatively. Thirdly, — although we detect among (mutually irreducible types of) plants and animals not only ontogenetic but also phylogenetic variations (development or evolution) — a universal or ‘general’ evolution from matter to human being has not yet been proved¹³⁹. As far as the choice between (b) and (d.i.) is concerned, the solution offered by (d.i.) is essentially a (syncretistic) compromise between those of (b) and (c)¹⁴⁰; it operates with antinomies, is philosophically hardly tenable, and explains the Word revelation of God artificially in order to provide for the possibility of ‘general’ evolution. We are left with — as far as I can see — only answer (b) to the question as to the origin of idiosyncrasies. Because it does justice to both radical diversity and to restricted evolutionary processes, it is sometimes referred to as the poliphyletic development and evolution theory. We cannot enter into any detail here; this answer also burdens us with difficult issues.

After all of this, we now have to attend to the diversity issue with respect to every type of idiosyncrasy, and also the unity issue, among others the unity and diversity of humankind, the diversity problem as it manifests itself in Botany and Zoology in terms of the monophyletic and poliphyletic theories, and the diversity in the matter domain, where originally the irreducibility of elements used to be accepted but has now been discarded in favour of the diversity of, among others, protons, neutrons, electrons and so on, that is now the order of the day. All these diversity issues confront us again and again when dealing with the problem of the origins of diversity. We cannot expand on all of it here.

When we depart from the radical diversity of the four idiosyncrasies that we mentioned — in other words, from the cosmos as consisting of four radically distinctive (but mutually

the biologist — does not have any say (or input) (in) this particular matter (*original Afrikaans unclear or misprint – translator and pgwdup*).

¹³⁹ Development and variations within a type (or phylum), narrowed down still further, within a genus, has been proved but not that universal evolution has taken place. Large gaps still exist in the supposed universal evolutionary process.

Most of the evidence in favour of universal evolution is based on circular arguments in the sense that the proofs presuppose the notion of evolution, and the ‘facts’ are then interpreted in view of this presupposition as well as in view of the *a priori* presupposition that “nature must be explicable by nature alone”. Other ‘proofs’ (e.g. provided by Genetics and Paleontology) are not decisive; in fact, many of the findings of Genetics count against the notion of universal evolution. See my *Die Evolusieleer in Die Heilige Skrif en die Natuurwetenskappe* (Van Schaik, 1927) and also in K.I.D.K., I. Since then, the biological sciences have made great strides, but the fundamental aspects remain unaffected. This is also evident from the recent publications of J. Duyvené de Wit (deceased).

¹⁴⁰ Cf. The exhaustive and penetrative discussion of Dooyeweerd’s criticism regarding Lever’s doctrine of creative evolution in *Philosophia Reformata*, Volume 24, 1959.

coherent) idiostances — we find ourselves challenged to examine them in their resemblances and in their differences. They provide us, at any rate, with an internal-cosmic survey of the cosmos: we can subdivide the cosmos (on the basis of their differences and their mutual coherence) into four realms of idiostances.

d. Before we now proceed with an examination of the resemblances and the diversity of idiostances, we would like to draw attention to a few other issues.

The issue of the variability, development and history of the idiostance in question will have to be dealt with later.

i. Important for now is firstly the distinction of primary and secondary idiostances. Matter, plant, animal and human beings are *primary idiostances*. But a nest (made by a bird), or a plough, eating utensils, a vacuum cleaner, an aeroplane, a book, a painting (made by a human being) each has — just as in the case of primary idiostances — its own compact stance. We refer to these as *secondary idiostances* because they find their origins in the activities or functioning of the primary idiostances. They also deserve close scrutiny. But this immediately invokes the issue of the relationship between the primary and secondary idiostances. From one dimensional perspective (about which more later), this relationship can be characterized as that of ‘subject’ and ‘object’; from the perspective of another dimension it is the relationship of agent and product¹⁴¹. We cannot discuss this matter any further before we have examined the resemblances and the differences of idiostances.

ii. The following is important here. If we call the idiostance human being a ‘person’ and other idiostances ‘things’, then the issue of the distinction of the relationships between (a) person and person, (b) person and thing and (c) thing and thing arises. If we further look at this issue in the perspective of our philosophical ground-idea, then we have to deal with the issue about the relationship between God as Person and the human being as person, as encountered in worship and religion, but also with respect to the te-al relationship between God as Person and all other idiostances (matter, plant, animal and human being). Also in this case, we can do justice to these issues only after having looked at the resemblances and differences between idiostances.

e. We must, in the meantime, briefly refer to the following fundamental questions, namely those pertaining to the ‘formal’ equality and equivalence of matter, plant, animal

¹⁴¹ Cf. my *B. en M.*, ch. 32.

and human being, and questions concerning an internal-cosmic centre as well as to the two orders (namely of creation, and of fall into sin (and evil) and redemption (and recreation)). These are all background issues, but they are presupposed when we examine the resemblances and differences of idiosyncrasies.

i. We may see matter, plant, animal and human being as a hierarchy according to which one is more complex than the other, higher and ‘superior’ than the others, with the human being forming the apex of God’s creation. At this point in our investigation, we only have to deal with the ‘formal’ equality and equivalence of these idiosyncrasies. They are all equal in the sense that they are all in-self-sufficient, creaturely, law-subjected creatures of God. As such, the human being has no priority over the animal, plant or matter, and the animal none over plant and matter, and the plant none over matter. They are all mere creatures, nothing more and nothing less. Their ‘formal’ equality and equivalence (as creatures of God) allows us to see the cosmos in its ‘formal’ unity. We have to begin with that. Only then (and against this backdrop) can we inquire into the ‘material’ diversity between them such as we tried to formulate with reference to the hierarchy mentioned above, according to which the human being is seen as the apex (not the centre) of God’s creation. This sequence in our way of looking at creation, as well as in our problem statement, is more than only a methodological issue; it is of fundamental import and has special implications for building a Calvinistic Philosophy. It also coheres with the fact that the cosmos in our opinion does not possess an internal-cosmic centre, but rather that matter, plant, animal and human being have been placed in an equal immediate relationship with respect to creation, maintenance, governance and finishing by God; in other words, that the created cosmos in its entirety and in all its parts and aspects should be primarily and immediately — radically theocentrically — understood in its dependence on the Triune God. Against this backdrop, and in this perspective, we have to then deal with the special relationship between God and the human being, between Christ and the human being, and between the Holy Spirit (along with Its revelatory work) and the human being. Placing the emphasis in the first instance on the relationship between Christ (and his redemptive and recreational work) and the human being, or on the relationship between the Holy Spirit (and Its revelatory work), the human being and the cosmos, makes one prone to forming or developing a onesided view of the cosmos.

ii. Elsewhere in *Volume II* of *O EN R*¹⁴² we distinguished between a. the absolute ground of unity; b. the formal unity; c. the material unity of the cosmos; as well as d. unity as repair / redress. We added that the cosmos does not have still another unity, namely an internal-cosmic centre. Philosophical systems such as materialism, vitalism, idealism and existentialism and so on, all allege to have ‘discovered’ in the cosmos such an internal-cosmic centre that supposedly will guarantee their unity. Dooyeweerd and Van Peursen, for instance, also tend to do this. Dooyeweerd posits the ‘heart’ (the selfness) of the human being as a supra-temporal, subjective concentration point of the cosmic diversity, and also maintains that the meaning totality of our entire temporary cosmos should be discovered in Christ¹⁴³, in his human nature as the root of the reborn human race, Whose heart — which is the wellspring of life (*Prov. 4:23 – translator*) — confesses the sovereignty of God, and bows under the law of God as the universal boundary between the Being of God and his creation as meaning; also that the temporary world (or cosmos) discovers its meaning in this religious root of humanity. Dooyeweerd offers us, in other words, a Christocentrically founded anthropological view of the cosmos. From his particular Christian background (including especially the presence of God), Van Peursen philosophically develops yet another anthropocentric view of the cosmos based on human existence and its horizon. In opposition to both, we have to argue that matter,

¹⁴² The principle of ‘unity and differentiation’ (“eenheid en differensiasie”).

¹⁴³ See the English translation of his main publication I, p. 99 (referred to in footnote 113). Dooyeweerd will not deny, in the final analysis, the theocentricity (and with it the te-al determinedness) of the cosmos. But we are concentrating here on the special emphasis that he places on the Christocentricity of the cosmos, in terms of which he positions the supra-temporal heart of the human being as well as the meaning totality of the cosmos in Christ as the root of the reborn human race, between God and the time-subjected cosmos.

In our view, God is in the same, equally immediate and direct relationship with matter, the plant and the animal as with the human being — in accordance with the order of creation. What is the connection between Dooyeweerd’s Christocentric and his anthropocentric view of the cosmos? It strikes us that Dooyeweerd has criticized humanism particularly astutely, that he showed how humanism is, on the one hand, inclined to absolutise, and on the other, to relapse into antinomies. But he has failed — as far as I know — to see the basic supposition of humanism, namely the human being at the centre of the cosmos, as a critical issue; in other words, though he has succeeded in sagaciously exposing the relevant absolutising and antinomies of humanism, he seems to have accepted their fundamental supposition as his own.

^{143a}. This is indeed a serious point of difference. According to him, the cosmos has an internal-cosmic centre; in my view – from the perspective of the order of creation – the cosmos does not have any such centre. The difference is that in my opinion – according to the order of fall into sin (evil) and redemption (recreation) – Christ is King but not the Centre of the cosmos, and according to the order of creation, the human being is the head and not the (subjective) centre of the cosmos, whereas Dooyeweerd has developed a Christocentrically founded anthropocentric view of the cosmos. This is indeed a serious difference about foundations that co-determines the broad outlines of the construction of these two philosophical approaches.

plant, animal and human being are all ‘formally’ equal as well as equivalent but at the same time ‘materially’ unequal and un-equivalent, and that they find themselves in immediate dependence on the Triune God; that the human being does not constitute the centre but is the crown of God’s creation and as such (and also ‘as creaturely image / likeness of God and as *mandator Dei* in his creation’) finds him- / herself in a unique relationship with God; that matter, plant, animal indeed only exist for the sake of the human being, but also that the human being exists only to actualise / realise matter, plant and animal; in fact, the human being has been called to actualise / realise the possibilities of matter, plant and animal just as if he / she had been called to actualise / realise his / her own potential. The point here is: do we have to regard the human being as the centre or as the head of the cosmos? What does God’s Word and what does the cosmos itself (matter, plant, animal and the human being) say about this in the light of the Word? The choice between the human being as the head and the crown of God’s creation and the human being as an internal-cosmic centre is no *adiaphoron* (unimportant matter), but is of paramount significance for further building the Calvinistic Philosophy since it determines this Philosophy in its fundamentals and broad outline.

iii. These matters (i.e. those concerning the formal equalness and equivalence, as well as of the material un-equalness and un-equivalence of matter, plant, animal and human being; and also whether the human being is the centre or head (crown) of the cosmos) all hang together with the issue of whether we should examine the cosmos firstly in accordance with the ‘order of creation’, or firstly according to the ‘order of sin (and evil) and redemption (and recreation)’. We are dealing here, according to God’s Word, with a sequence. God initially created his creation good, very good indeed, but then sin and evil made their entry into it. With his redemptive death, Christ in principle saved the human being from sin, and recreated the cosmos, in the process bringing about a new order, ‘renewing’ all things. With his kindness (or ‘general grace’) God still maintains his creation. This tells us that we have to begin with the ‘order of creation’, and only then should we examine the creation (*in casu* the cosmos) according to the ‘order of sin (and evil) and redemption (and recreation)’. Beginning with the latter would have made a difference because with the latter Christ receives a particular emphasis, which is not the case in terms of the former because there the cosmos (matter, plant, animal and human being) is placed in an immediate relationship with the Triune God. In other words, a Philosophy would then be primarily theocentric (and only secondarily Christocentric); in the latter case, a Philosophy would be primarily Christocentric (and only secondarily

theocentric). (In terms of the order of sin (and evil) and redemption (and recreation) we find ourselves confronted with the same issue, viz. whether Christ is the Centre, the Head or the King of his creation. In our opinion, Christ is not the Centre but rather the King, but according to Dooyeweerd he is also the Centre of cosmic totality and diversity; and the choice here is also no *adiaphoron*.) With his Christocentric anthropological Philosophy, Dooyeweerd has to begin with the order of sin (and evil) and redemption (and recreation), whereas in our opinion, he should have begun with the order of creation. My objection against Dooyeweerd's 'Christocentric direction of the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea' is, according to him 'indeed a serious point of difference'^{143a}. My view is not scholastic, which can be seen in the fact that the order of creation and the order of sin (and evil) and redemption (and recreation) both are taken to pertain to the entire creation. Cosmos is not dualistically divided into two separate domains (of, for instance, nature and grace). Dooyeweerd poses yet another question, viz. whether my Philosophy can be regarded as *Christ*-ian if I do not take creation to be primarily *Christ*-centric. I would argue that it can be, since acceptance of the order of creation belongs to the *Christian* faith (according to the Scriptures) and it also fully respects the order of fall into sin (and evil) and redemption (and recreation) — though in view (against the perspective and backdrop) of the order of creation. And we have to bear in mind that redemption and recreation by Christ is also embraced by a radically theocentric truth: after his redemptive and recreation work, Christ delivers everything back to God so that God can be all, and in everything (1 Cor 15: 28). The first and the last truth is the radical theocentric foundation of the creation of God. [\[Back to Contents\]](#)

4. *Cosmic Dimensions*^{143b}

4.a. *Introductory remarks*

In our further investigation of the idiosyncrasies and their coherences — along with their resemblances and differences — it is of importance to examine the relevant appertaining idiosyncrasies and their coherences. We begin with the concrete extant (and mutually interconnected) idiosyncrasies, but should not in our examination of *appertaining* idiosyncrasies lose sight of the idiosyncrasies (and their coherence), but should constantly relate to those idiosyncrasies all the findings and conclusions resulting from further examination. In all of this, we should bear in mind that the cosmos as cosmos is a creation of God and that it is hapantly determined in diverse respects.

^{143b} See my *B. en M.*

Idions are — as already stated — both idiostances as well as appertaining idions (relevant to the idiostances). We find ourselves faced with yet another embarrassment in the further investigation of the idiostances as well as of the appertaining idions — including all the relevant relationships. We discover that their numbers are so immense that we feel as if we were lost in a labyrinth. We perceive, for instance and among others (in alphabetical order), idions such as aim, betrayal, cause, concept, conception, fact, fall, fear, fly, form, function, growth, heal, high, human being, hunger, instinct, jurisprudence, labour, love, matter, money, movement, music, noise, number, pain, play, politics, pray, principle, punishment, sin, size, spouse, surface, think, time, value, will, word, yellow, and so on. We need to find an internal-cosmic key for changing this (apparent) labyrinth into a surveyable garden that we can wander around in, in which we can distinguish between idiostances and their appertaining idions.

One possible key (often used by philosophers — in diverse ways) is to select one or only a few of the idions and use it / them as the vantage point for a survey of, for instance (in alphabetical sequence) causality, consciousness, *elan vital* (vital life), evolution, fact, number, history, heart (the selfness of the human being), idea, language (or proposition), situated existence, thinking (or reason), will, or any other idion. This strategy is available to them because everything in the cosmos coheres with everything else. In such cases, where the vantage point is taken from one (or a few) particular idion(s), the philosopher is offered a particular (reduced) and therefore one-sided view of the cosmos, he/she (incorrectly) discovers an internal-cosmic centre, thereby causing him or her to run the risk (although it does not always happen) of relativising the cosmic diversity by viewing the other idions from the perspective of the favoured idion(s), and of even absolutising the favoured idion(s). This is an unacceptable key to the survey, in our opinion. Being too narrow, it does not do justice to all the idions. It is interesting to note that the choice of a favoured idion is always fundamentally co-determined by pre-scientific (life- and worldview, amongst others religious) convictions. To acquire a proper survey of the idions, we should allow the idions themselves to reveal how they should be surveyed. Therefore, we commence with the idiostances, distinguish them from the appertaining idions, and then search for the key to the survey in the appertaining idions.

We already distinguished between relative and radical diversity. For purposes of the intended survey, we need only focus on the radical (mutually irreducible) diversity, because the relative diversity is rooted in the relevant radically distinctive idions and is

therefore categorised in terms of them. When we turn our attention to the radical diversity of *appertaining idions*, it strikes us that some are *particular* and others *universal* in nature. In my opinion, this distinction provides us with the key for ‘seeing’ the (apparent) labyrinth of cosmic diversity as a survey-able garden in which we can wander around.

The distinction between e.g. number and space, between physical and biotic processes, between thinking and language, between economy and art, between morality and justice, between nation and state, between a hospital and a factory, between education and healing, between development and history, and so on, is *particular* because we compare particular idions in each case. We should, however, turn our attention to the particular diversity of the appertaining idions.

There is another radical diversity of appertaining idions that can be regarded as *universal*, in which the entire cosmos (matter and plant and animal and human being) shares, and in terms of which the appertaining idions can be arranged (and even classified). The distinction between the universal and particular diversities of idions helps us escape the labyrinthine embarrassment in which the plethora of idions initially landed us. We refer to this universal diversity as cosmic dimensions^{143c}. We can also see them as universal facets (or, less appropriately, as universal sides) of the cosmos. We do not refer to them as universal aspects of the cosmos because ‘aspect’ is only an aspect for the person that observes, offering only a vision from a particular orientation and not a full-blown ontic survey provided by the cosmos itself. Each cosmic dimension allows us to see the entire cosmos (the entire created universe), and therefore also matter and plant and animal and human being, from a specific facet or side, and can therefore be regarded as universal. They are not hapantic qualifications, because each cosmic dimension only reveals to us the entire cosmos from a specific facet or side. Not only all of the idiostances but also all of the appertaining idions are part of hapantic qualifications. We have to (as far as I can see) distinguish between at least four cosmic dimensions that are not mutually reducible but that cohere in different ways – notwithstanding their radical diversity. Each cosmic dimension embodies (or better:

^{143c} In place of our term *cosmic dimensions* Dooyeweerd (in his epistemology) refers to *dimensions of the human experience horizon*. His dimensions (concomitant with his anthropocentric view of the cosmos) is formulated in anthropocentric terms. ‘Cosmic dimensions’, on the other hand, is a cosmic-ontic formulation. According to him, the dimension of human experience horizon of individuality structure is founded in that of modality, and modality in that of time.

reveals) in itself a (coherent) radical diversity of the relevant appertaining idions. But — and this is the first requirement — we should never forget that the concrete cosmos consists of concrete idiostances (matter, plant, animal, human being) together with their appertaining idions, and that the cosmic dimensions do not possess any independence nor any own-stance or self-standing existence (like idiostances), but are universal idionic qualifications (appertaining to the idiostances). Our further analyses of the cosmic dimensions should be constantly related to the concrete cosmos (to the concrete matter, plant, animal and human being). [\[Back to Contents\]](#)

4.b. The different cosmic dimensions

i. When we now attempt to discover what the concrete idiostances (matter, plant, animal and human being) — irrespective of their creatureliness, in-self-sufficiency and law-subjectedness, as well as their hapantic qualifications — have in common, we see that they firstly have something that is fixed ('unchanging') and something that is dynamic ('changing'¹⁴⁴). This is another manifestation of the issue of 'being' and 'becoming', with which philosophers have been struggling since the days of Parmenides and Heraclitus till the present day¹⁴⁵. We will not discuss this subtle and theoretically overtaxed historical struggle in Philosophy; we merely take cognisance of the fact that the struggle has remained topical even in our own time, with the dynamic aspect seeming to gain the upperhand¹⁴⁶.

ii. Number as such (discrete quantity) and space as space each has a fundamental nature ('essential being'; Philosophy of the Cosmonic Idea: 'core meaning / meaning kernel') that is *fixed*. However they may cohere, the one is not reducible to the other, and cannot change into the other. Also, for example, the psychic and the physical each has a fixed (mutually irreducible) fundamental nature ('essential being', 'core meaning'); the psychic cannot change into the physical and vice versa; this applies even when they are both subject to change. Language might have a history, but language as language

¹⁴⁴ See my *Die kosmiese dimensie van gebeurtenisse* in O en R Volume II regarding the difference between the 'fixed' and the 'dynamic'. The 'static' is something else than the 'fixed' and also pertains to the 'dynamic'. The 'fixed' stands apart from the distinction between the 'static' and the 'dynamic'.

¹⁴⁵ Compare, for instance, the respective existentialist philosophies and the biological pan-evolutionism, the 'dissolution' of matter in energy and in energetism. Everything becomes; everything changes.

¹⁴⁶ This favouratism is fundamentally associated with so-called 'irrationalism' and the new value cult. One hardly hears anything today about fixed, 'unchanging' principles, the way one did a mere half century ago.

(in other words, according to its fundamental nature, ‘essential being’, ‘core meaning’) will always remain language, and never changes into something else (such as for instance, economics, law or worship, irrespective of the extent of its connections to these other idioms). Morality as morality can never be (fine) art as art; morality as morality (in other words according to its fundamental nature, ‘essential being’, ‘core meaning’) never changes into art (and vice versa), despite the degree of their intertwinements and despite the degree to which they are subject to change. We can go on like this. We refer to these, and to other similar fixed qualifications, as ‘modal’ conditions; they are ontic ‘qualifications of being’. One could also refer to them as fixed ‘modes of being’. Reference to them brings the *cosmic dimension of modalities* in sight. The entire cosmos (matter, plant, animal and human being) is modally determined. Matter shares in the modal conditions or characteristics of number, space, the ‘physical’; plants share in all of these as well as in the biotic (or ‘life’); animals share in all of the above as well as in the psychic, and human beings all of those already mentioned as well as in logic, the lingual (pertaining to language) and the aesthetic, the economic, juridical and ethical, and finally, worship (religion in restricted sense). The modal determinedness of the entire cosmos reveals to us a universal side of the cosmos (and therefore also of matter, plant, animal and human being). The cosmic dimension of modalities reveals to us a fixed side, the modal stability of the cosmos. It is important to keep in mind that all modal conditions are subject to the modal law-order.

iii. The cosmos (matter and plant and animal and human being) also reveals another dimension or side. We already mentioned that each of, for instance, the physical, biotic, psychic, lingual, economic, aesthetic, moral – notwithstanding the stable and fixed nature of each — constantly change. This is of course true of the entire cosmos: matter and plant and animal and human being change. This reveals to us the dynamic dimension of the cosmos. With this dynamic is also given cause and effect, as well as means and purpose. And with all of this, also time. We do not discuss change, dynamics, cause, aim or purpose, time and so in this context, but we see all of these ‘concretised’ in events. Events entail among others origin and decay, movement and change, parting and connecting, becoming, growth and development, activities, choosing, actions, education, healing, history and so on. The entire cosmos, matter and plant and animal and human being — all have to do (in many diverse ways) with events. This highlights the *cosmic dimension of events*. The many radically distinctive types of events all cohere — are connected — in many different ways. Important here is to

understand that we find events that repeat themselves as well as events that are non-repeatable. And events as events are contingent. We do not only find general laws for events but also universal laws that apply to contingent i.e. non-repeatable events¹⁴⁷.

iv. Event (or rather the cosmic dimension of events) cannot be reduced to modality (or the cosmic dimension of modalities) — and vice versa. They are radically different.

We need to distinguish between them, but it is impossible to separate them, because they cohere in a wide array of manners. This can be seen in the fact that they are dimensions of the idiostances matter, plant, animal and human being. We already noted that, although the modal, fundamental nature of each of language and the moral is fixed, each of them also changes from time to time (each has a history). History, in turn, may, in accordance with its fundamental nature, be a continuation or ‘move-on’ of events, but we find that history (when looked at closely) is modally distinguishable as history of e.g. language or morals. Notwithstanding the modal fundamental nature of the physical, the biotic, the psychic, they are all subject to change; movement (event) can be modally distinguished as physical, biotic and psychic movement. An event is however not modally restricted, and can occur across modal boundaries. A bad tooth (modally biotic), for instance, can cause toothache (modally physic), and fear (modally psychic) can paralyse (modally biotic). Despite this close and intimate connectedness between event and modality, they remain radically different (mutually irreducible), and we have to bear this in mind in the course of our inquiry into the cosmos (matter, plant, animal and human being). This is one of the objections to the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea (*in casu* Dooyeweerd¹⁴⁸), namely its inadequate distinction in the theory of modal law spheres that regards modality and event as being virtually alike.

v. When we turn our attention in this respect to the idiostances matter, plant, animal and human being, we detect dual (both modal and dynamically determined) structuredness. We already observed that in the cosmos everything coheres with everything else (which is a hapantic qualification), that structure is the manner in which a particular coherence takes shape (another hapantic qualification) and that, therefore, the entire cosmos is

¹⁴⁷ Contingency refers to a particular event or incident. (I prefer not to use the term ‘coincidental’). It is a contingency that it is now raining in Potchefstroom at this moment, or that you are now reading this sentence. The now-here-occurrence (the now-here-actually happening) occurs now-here and is as such and in its ‘now-here-ness’ once-only and unrepeatable.

¹⁴⁸ Vollenhoven, however — and also differently from me — distinguishes (in his *Isagogé Philosophiae*, College-notes, Published by Theja, Amsterdam, 1943) modality, individuality structure, event and the good-evil distinction; these distinctions are analogical to my four cosmic dimensions.

structured. But we now have to turn our attention to the (jointly modal and dynamic) structural unity of each of these idiostances. Matter, plant, animal and human being are more than merely their structures. Analysis of these (idiostantic) structures shows that we are no longer dealing with a hapantic qualification but rather with a cosmic dimension, namely the *cosmic dimension of idiostantic structures*.

But we now notice something else. The idiostantic structures not only allow us to see the idiostances as structural wholes with their respective modal and dynamic conditions, but also according to their individual and social sides. The individual and social sides of an idiostance are also mutually irreducible. The human being is not only an individual but also the converging point of all the societal structures of which he or she is a member; and each of the human societal relationships possesses its own type of idiostantic structural unity. The same applies *mutatis mutandis* for animal and plant. Even atoms, that used to be understood individualistically, are nowadays ‘viewed’ in their ‘social’ connectedness as positrons, electrons, neutrons, and as atom and field. A human being indeed possesses an individual side but also a social one, and these are connected in an unbreakable bond; and this applies — *mutatis mutandis* — also to animal, plant and matter. This is the reason for referring to this dimension of the cosmos as the *cosmic dimension of individual and social idiostantic structures*.

vi. Idiostantic structures are not the same as modalities or as events. The cosmic dimension of idiostantic structures can therefore not be reduced to that of modalities or that of events, and vice versa. This implies that we have to recognise the existence of at least these three radically different cosmic dimensions.

It is also evident that these three dimensions cohere (are bound together) in many ways, on the one hand because the structures of the concrete existing idiostances (and with them, the entire cosmos) are themselves inseparable, but also because these idiostantic structures include the modal and dynamic structuredness of idiostances. We will return to the matter of the modal-fixed and the dynamic-changeable structuredness of idiostances (and their mutually unbreachable connectedness).

The cosmic law-order also applies to the idiostantic structures. By stipulating that the state as a social institute (consisting of a government / authority and subjects in a particular territory) should form and maintain a juridical inter-order among individuals, among individuals and societal relationships / groups as well as among itself and the other societal relationships / groups, in the process respecting the responsibility of

individuals as well as the unique identity and assignment of every other societal relationship / group, is to stipulate an idiostantic law for the structure of the state. Despite this stipulation, a state can (e.g.) still dictatorially violate the rights of an individual, usurp the particular identity and assignment of another societal relationship or structure, in which case it will transgress the particular law applicable to its own structure. To what extent do the structural shifts (in the case of a church-state like the Vatican or of a state-church or an individuals'-church (liberalism) or a nation-church (National-Socialism)) still conform to the particular structural law? It is also evident from this that we have to distinguish between idiostantic structure and the law (or norm) that applies to it, and also that we should refrain from relativising the law (or norm) by regarding it as a structural stipulation.

vii. A glance at the entire cosmos enables us to see the distinction between good and evil, or rather, of positive and negative value (or non-value). We detect the following (positive and negative) values and / or axial qualifications or references to values (in alphabetical order): advantage — disadvantage; beautiful — ugly; clean — dirty; culture — deviant culture; establishing a state — a decaying state; family construction — family decay or destruction; following a call or vocation — forsaking a call or vocation; food — poison; freedom — slavery; health — disease; holy — sinful; instituting a church — ecclesiastical schism; justice — injustice; guidance — seduction; life — death; loyalty — betrayal; marriage — divorce; moral — immoral; meaningful — meaningless; order — chaos; real — false; tactful — tactless; progress — deterioration; true — untrue; valid thinking — fallacious thinking; war — peace. We can see from these and other similar (positive and negative) values, value qualifications regarding idions, and references to values that the entire cosmos — matter, plant, animal and human being, all — share values. Value forms the universal side of the cosmos. There is, in other words, a *cosmic dimension of values*. We can reformulate this in religious language and te-al terms: the entire cosmos shares in value because it has its origins in God. According to his Word revelation, God created the cosmos ‘good’, very good indeed; it has also fallen into sin and evil, in other words, it is now sharing also in non-value / un-value. The victory over sin and evil through the redemptive death of Christ in which God revealed his love for his creation is another impressive way of expressing the value side of the creation (*in casu* of the cosmos). Idiostances all have value; the same applies for appertaining idions, as is evident from modal, (individual and social) idiostantic-structural, and dynamic (relating to events) distinguishable types and kinds of values.

Value is, however, no modal condition, no idiostantic structure, no event. The cosmic dimension of values cannot be reduced to that of modalities, individual and social idiostantic structures, or that of events. Value or value qualification coheres inviolably with the cosmic law-order; in fact, the cosmic dimension of value has its own dimensional law-application.

viii. Apart from particular (cohering) diversity, we therefore find in the cosmos also universal (cohering) diversity — as revealed in the *cosmic dimensions*. I used to refer to the cosmic dimensions as *cone sections* of the cosmos — which I now regard as an unfortunate term. Dooyeweerd speaks of *dimensions of the horizon of human experience* which is understandable from his anthropocentric conception of the cosmos. The term ‘cosmic dimensions’ does more ontic justice to the universal side or aspect of the cosmos. Dooyeweerd distinguishes between *three* dimensions of the horizon of human experience, viz. of time, modality and individuality structure. We distinguish *four* cosmic dimensions, viz. modality, events, (individual and social) idiostantic structures, and values. Dooyeweerd and we have two in common, viz. of modality and individuality (or rather idiostantic) structures. Whereas we distinguish between modality and events, Dooyeweerd allows them to coincide and conflate; according to him, modality and meaning-dynamic should be seen as distinctions within the dimension of modalities (aspects or meaning-sides of the cosmos). In our opinion, time is not a separate dimension, as in Dooyeweerd’s case. In our opinion, time is revealed in the context of the cosmic dimension of events; where *in concreto* we find an event (the dynamic, also embracing the static) there is also time; where *in concreto* we find time, there is also event. According to the cosmic dimension of events, the entire cosmos (matter, plant, animal and human being) is subject to time; and to be subject to time here means determined by time and not temporary (only for a particular time, transitory); the temporary or transitory nature of the cosmos is something different from its subjectedness to time. The entire cosmos as well as the ‘heart’ (or self) of the human being is subject to time. Dooyeweerd, however, regards the heart of the human being as supra-temporary, despite the fact that he sees matter, plant, animal and human being — including the heart of the human being — as meaningful, in other words that they have a creaturely mode of being subject to the law. We contest this view on the grounds that also the heart of the human being can change (for instance, in the case of falling into sin or repentance), and that such change is only possible in and with time. Because Dooyeweerd accepts that the modal and individuality-structural arrangements are

grounded in the dimension of time, he also regards them as subject to time. This is why he speaks in this sense of our temporary cosmos, for instance that $2 + 2 = 4$ is a temporary truth. Instead of like Dooyeweerd speaking in this sense of ‘temporary’ truths, we rather speak of creaturely truths. It stands to reason, in our opinion, that $2 + 2 = 4$ is a creaturely truth, not a temporary (or better: time-subjected) truth. Yes, if we were stipulating by counting (to count is an event) that $2 + 2 = 4$, then of course the act is time-subject. But that is something else. In our opinion, modal conditions are creaturely but not time-subject^{148a}. This does not imply (as has been argued), that they are eternal (that $2 + 2 = 4$ is an eternal truth), only that they are a-temporal, that with the revelation of the cosmic dimension of modalities, the cosmos (the modalities) is offered something different from event, something a-temporal. What is the connection of the modal distinction between number and space, or between morality and justice *as such* with the course of time? We do not focus here on actual (and therefore time-subject) events, but rather on the relevant fixed modal ways of being. Paying attention to the coherence between the four cosmic dimensions would enable us to see *in casu* the coherence of modalities and events (including time). But this is another problem altogether. We do not find the cosmic dimension (dimension of the human experience horizon) of events in Dooyeweerd¹⁴⁹. And also not the cosmic dimension of values.

We are now confronted with the question whether there are indeed only four radically distinguishable cosmic dimensions (only four universal distinctions, only four universal sides to the cosmos). We have already said, they are radically distinguishable (irreducible to each other). Are there more than four? Possibly. I can however only see these four. The discovery of a fifth (radically distinguishable from the extant four) would push philosophical examination of the cosmos another step ahead. ‘A step ahead’ because amazingly, for e.g. the particular and indeed fundamental — if also *cultically* stretched — meaning of value (in a universal sense) has only been discovered in our own time. This does not mean however, that previously values were unknown or not accepted. It would only have been difficult in previous times to acknowledge the existence of the cosmic dimension of values.

ix. Each cosmic dimension only allows us to see the cosmos universally from only one particular side. We have to distinguish between them, but we cannot separate them.

^{148a} All cosmic dimensions, all idiostances, the entire cosmos are creaturely.

¹⁴⁹ See footnote 148.

They are connected in countless ways, firstly, as universal sides of the concrete idiostances (matter, plant, animal and human being). Each of these idiostances may in its entirety and unity be more than the sum of its cosmic dimensional sides, but these sides find an inner connectedness in the fact that they are all sides of a particular idiostance. They are also connected and intertwined in other respects. The human being (not the animal) is a moral being, and this pre-determines in fundamental sense the essence of the moral; one can detect the moral in its moral nature; analysis of moral actions reveals morality as event; the moral has its own unique place in and determinedness through the (individual and social) idiostantic-structural determinedness of the human being; one can also see the moral in its value qualifications (good — evil). According to its fundamental nature, the moral is a modal way of being, but it cannot be isolated from its connectedness to and relatedness with other cosmic dimensions. The human being (not the animal) creates history, and this determines the nature of history in fundamental terms; history is a (sequential 'move-on' of) event(s); its cosmic-dimensional nature is event (dynamic, temporal); and despite this, one can distinguish between various modalities of history — e.g. history of language, of art, of economy, of devotion(s), and so on. One can also distinguish idiostantic-structurally types of history — e.g. history of a person (in a biography), a marriage, a people, a state, an industry, a sports club, and so on. With respect to the fundamental nature of history (continuation or 'move-on') and with respect to the purpose/sense of history, one can also distinguish between progress and regress, and in doing so, view history in its value-qualifications.. In the same way we have to, with respect to individual idiostantic structures, carefully take note of which idiostance it is a structure, of the role of a relevant modal stipulation of it, of the influence of a certain event and of the relevant value-relatedness of it. One should also never isolate the value of a particular idiostance from its modal, dynamic and idiostantic-structural stipulations. The idion of value realisation / actualisation is another point of interest. Each cosmic dimension — irrespective of its fundamental distinctive nature — contains references to and connections with other cosmic dimensions; they contain these references because the different cosmic dimensions are radically diverse and mutually irreducible. Each reference to other dimensions from within a particular dimension is qualified by the latter dimension, in other words, it fundamentally belongs to the latter. A possible ontic hierarchy of cosmic dimensions would rest on the supposition that the value dimension is preceded by the other three; that the (individual and social) idiostantic structures are preceded by that of modalities and events. One could say in

this case, that in their references, the lower cosmic dimensions (in the hierarchy) contain dimensional anticipations of the higher dimensions, and that in their references, the higher dimensions contain retrocipations of the lower ones (analogous to the anticipation and retrocipation theory in connection with the modal law-spheres, about which more later), whereas the reciprocal references among the modal and dynamic cosmic dimensions could be referred to as transversal (in lieu of a more appropriate term), because we can hardly speak of a hierarchy here¹⁵⁰.

x. We should point out that with the cosmic dimension of values we find ourselves radically confronted with issues that let us see the cosmos in terms of the order of fall into sin (and evil) and redemption (and recreation), which in turn emphasises our philosophical ground-idea of the cosmos as creation in relationship with Christ as Redeemer and Recreator, and of the cosmos to Him to Whom all power has been given in heaven and on earth. This deserves penetrative discussion. We shall attend to this later.

xi. The distinction and coherence among idiostances has provided us with a certain internal-cosmic survey of the cosmic idions. By distinguishing in the case of appertaining idions between particular and universal diversity, and by discovering that each idiostance possesses four universal sides (cosmic dimensions), we now find that what we initially assumed to be a labyrinth has indeed become a garden in which we can wander around; in other words, we have discovered yet another internal-cosmic view of the cosmos. Analysis of all the appertaining idions according to their cosmic dimensions supplies us with a simplified overview. There is of course the danger of oversimplification. To avoid this, we have to revert in each cosmic dimensional approach to actual, concrete idiostances. But even then we run the risk of using the distinction between God and cosmos, the hapantic qualifications, the idiostances and the cosmic dimensions as a rigid scheme into which we might be tempted to force everything in our field of philosophical inquiry. The survey that we have developed up to now with all these elements should never become a fixed and inflexible scheme. Reality is much too varied and many-sided / versatile to be fixed once and for all in a single scheme. We have to be open to new possibilities, also to the restricted nature of philosophical knowledge, the

¹⁵⁰ In my *B. en M.* I maintained that the cosmic dimension of values is grounded in that of events, and that of events in that of idiostantic structures, and that of idiostantic structures in that of modalities. I abandoned this view. The unilinear hierarchy does not seem correct to me, and is probably also an oversimplification.

fact that it is only partial knowledge, and that in our inquiries we find ourselves constantly confronted with hyperdoxal truths that transcend the human mind. Despite this, Philosophy is not possible without such a cautious guiding survey; in our opinion, the survey that we have given above — despite its inadequacies — (at least partially) accounts for reality, and can be used for further philosophical investigations, while of course bearing in mind that we have to be open to anything else to which this guideline has not done justice. [\[Back to Contents\]](#)

5. *The cosmic dimension of modalities*

- a. With its (modal) theory of law-spheres, the *Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea* has supplied us with a profoundly penetrative and embracing theory of modalities. Apart from certain points of difference of opinion, and a few suggested points of correction, the *Philosophy of the Creation Idea* accepts these rich fruits borne by the *Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea*, and feels itself compelled to co-operation in the further construction of the modality theory, and to mutually struggle to get to the truth, also where differences of opinion arise. This is possible because of shared philosophical foundations and a commonly shared field of philosophical investigation.
- b. The first question to address is: which radically distinguishable (irreducible) modalities (or ‘modal ‘law-spheres’) can be discerned? The reply of the *Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea* is: fourteen (Dooyeweerd proposed a fifteenth), namely the arithmetical (number), the spatial (extensity), the physical (movement) — in Dooyeweerd’s opinion: movement and energy — the biotic (life), the psychic (feeling), the logical (analytical), the historic (cultural development), the lingual (language or symbolic signage), the social (intercourse), the economic (saving), the aesthetic (beauty, harmony), the juridical (retribution), the moral / ethical (love in temporal relationships) and the pisteutic (faith).

In our opinion, the *energetic* forms part of the cosmic dimension of events, and the same applies for the historical. The *historical* is no feature, characteristic or manner of being (in other words, modal condition), but rather a temporal progression of sequential events. Exactly because of the fact that history has no modal conditions, we are able — as a result of the mutual connectedness of cosmic dimensions — to distinguish between different types of modal history (such as of thinking / thought, language, art, religion and so on) and also between idiosyncratic-structural types of history (that of e.g. an individual, a family, a nation, a church, an association, and so on). In our opinion, it would be

artificial to understand the historical modally, and then to explain all these different kinds (and types) of history in terms of modal anticipations and retrocipations because each kind of modal history remains history in itself. The same applies to the *social* which in our opinion is also not an attribute or a mode of being (in other words, a modal condition). It forms part of the cosmic dimension of individual and social idiostantic structures. The ‘social’ reveals to us a connection, a bond, a relationship primarily between idiostances, in other words, plants, animals and human beings (and even — as will be indicated later — among material ‘things’), as we find respectively in plant and animal colonies, in parasitical relationships between host and guest and in other forms of symbiosis; also in the case of a marriage, family, state, church, association, and so on. If we looked at the (idiostantic-structurally qualified) ‘social’ in its relationship with the cosmic dimension of modalities, we could distinguish between various modal types of the ‘social’, such as biotic, intellectual (or logical), lingual (language) intercourse, economic exchange, moral intercourse, and so on. To see the ‘social’ as a modal law-sphere and as something exclusively found among people — as does the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea — would require from us to explain the social aspect of plants and animal colonies as well as of parasites and other forms of symbiosis in terms of anticipations, which would in our opinion be artificial.

We therefore retain twelve — coherent, but radically distinctive — modal spheres (or modalities), namely number, space, the ‘physical’, the biotic, (or ‘life’), the ‘psychic’, and then three that cohere in a particular sense: the logical, the lingual and the aesthetic; then another three that particularly cohere: the economic, the juridical and the ethical; and then, finally, worship. There might of course be more than these twelve mutually and radically distinctive modal spheres or modalities. For the time being, we ‘see’ only these twelve.

c. Each modality (modal condition, modal sphere) has its own fundamental nature or ‘essential being’, in terms of which it is radically distinctive from every other modality (and therefore irreducible to any other). The Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea refers to this as the ‘core meaning’; these ‘meaning kernels’, as formulated in that Philosophy, are given in parentheses as mentioned above. We, however, see the fundamental nature (‘essence’ or ‘core meaning’) of a modal sphere of several modalities differently from the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea. For example, we see language as: the revelation of the perceived (discerned), and the setting of the perceived / discerned in

observable signs. Economy, we see as: goods-supplying provision; the ethical as: concern for the person.

d. Each modal sphere and together with it, its fundamental nature or ‘core meaning kernel’, is subject to its own particular modal law. Not only the fundamental nature, ‘essential being’ or ‘core meaning’ has to be discovered but also the law that applies in each case. In doing all of this, we should in our opinion avoid one of the shortcomings of the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea, viz. assuming the core meaning (or fundamental nature) of a modal sphere to be only that which complies with the modal law. Let us explain this point with reference to the modality of the moral or ethical. The law here is the law to love, and the fundamental nature or ‘core meaning’ of the ethical is love in temporary relationships. We have to bear in mind that the unethical / immoral also belongs to the ethical modality. The fundamental nature or ‘core meaning’ of the ethical should embrace both the ethical-good and the unethical / immoral whereas the law for the ethical merely stipulates what should be ‘taken’ for ethically / morally good — in normative terms. This insight, a breakthrough made by Prof. Dr P.G.W. du Plessis¹⁵¹, implies that the delineation of the different core meanings of (especially the normative) modalities as formulated by the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea has to be *de novo* revisited. To stay with this example: in our opinion, taking care of / caring for the other (person) is the fundamental nature of the moral / ethical¹⁵². Taking care of / having concern for the person embraces both the ethically / morally good (compliance with the ethical law requiring one to love one’s fellow human being as one loves oneself), in other words love for the person, as well as the ethically / morally bad, i.e. unlove for the person (ethical or moral behaviour that does not comply with the stipulations of the ethical / moral law).

e. Once we have discovered the fundamental nature (or core meaning) of a modal sphere, we have to investigate the order (or arrangement) of the modalities. Such an investigation will show that we are indeed dealing with an ontic hierarchy. One modality presupposes and is more complex than another, is grounded in another, and is higher in the hierarchy than another. The psychic is, for instance, founded in the biotic because it presupposes the biotic, and is also more complex than the biotic; by the same token, the ethical is grounded in the juridical. The Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea assumes

¹⁵¹ See footnote 111

¹⁵² See footnote 112.

this hierarchy to be a rectilinear hierarchy from the arithmetical (number) to the pisteutic — as indicated above. We assume it to be rectilinear from the arithmetical to the psychic, and then consisting of two parallel groups of related modalities, both spanned / covered by religious worship as the highest modality — also as outlined above.

f. It is significant that each modal sphere contains references to all the other modal spheres. An example of this is the number *pi* that belongs as number in the arithmetical modal sphere but refers beyond itself to the modal sphere of space. Feeling, as such, belongs to the psychic modal sphere whereas a feeling of physical power and of vitality refers beyond itself to lower (in terms of the hierarchy) modal spheres, and logical feeling, linguistic feeling, artistic feeling, juridical feeling, ethical feeling and so on refer to higher (in terms of hierarchy) modal spheres. Such references to lower spheres are referred to as retrocitations, whereas references to higher spheres are known as anticipations. All references (both retrocitations and anticipations) are qualified by the fundamental nature ('essence' or 'core meaning') of that particular sphere; in other words, they belong as such — notwithstanding their references to other spheres — to that particular sphere. We are dealing here with a notable type of coherence between that which is radically different, where the radical diversity may not be relativised or levelled out. The principle of coherence may however be universalised (as the Philosophy of the Cosmonic Idea has been doing). In that case, it is assumed that each modal sphere refers or points to all other modal spheres, in other words that each modal sphere mirrors in itself the entire cosmos (in modal sense). In our view, one can go even further with the principle of referencing; apart from modal references, one could also attempt to discover dimensional references (from one cosmic dimension to another), such as we would find in family feeling, national feeling, ecclesiastical feeling (modal references to the cosmic dimension of idiostantic structures), historical feeling (a reference to the cosmic dimension of events) and value-feeling (a reference to the cosmic dimension of values). Inversely, there will also be references from the other cosmic dimensions to that of modalities.

g. Other avenues of investigation, according to the cosmic dimension of modalities, are open to us; I am thinking here of (among others) the doctrine of modal restriction and disclosure, as developed by the Philosophy of the Cosmonic Idea. I find it hard to accept when this Philosophy assumes that every modal sphere is subject to its particular functional time as determined by its core meaning, although I agree with the notion of

inter-dimensional references from modal towards temporal conditions^{152a}. There can, however, be no doubt that we have a immense source of research possibilities in the cosmic dimension of modalities, as evidenced by all the problems encountered when investigating the fundamental nature ('core meaning') of every modality, its anti- and retrocipations, law-determinedness and its position in the hierarchy of modalities. Every expert in the field will concede that the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea has achieved momentous, profound and comprehensive results in this respect, but will also realise that the task has not been finished at all.

h. The following two principles are of great significance. Due to the radical diversity of the modal spheres, and also to the fundamental nature (or 'core meaning') of each, and to the fact that in each modal sphere the anticipations and the retrocipations are qualified by the particular fundamental nature (or 'core meaning') of each modal sphere, and due to the fact that each modal sphere is subject to the modal law applicable to it, each modal sphere is also subject to the principle of 'sphere sovereignty'. Due to the fact that each modal sphere contains in its fundamental nature or 'core meaning' anticipations and / or retrocipations to all other modal spheres, in other words mirrors (in terms of its modal dimension) the entire cosmos, they are each also subject to the principle of 'sphere-universality'. The discovery of this principle is an important finding of the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea. We now have to firstly bear in mind that the cosmos is a *coherence of radical diversity*, that the principle of 'sovereignty in its own sphere' is an expression of this radical modal diversity whereas the principle of 'universality in its own sphere' is an expression of the universal coherence of modalities, in other words, that both principles together are expressions of the coherent modal radical diversity of the cosmos. But, secondly, we have to be mindful of the existence of a coherence of radical diversity in the other three cosmic dimensions, and of the fact that in each of them a principle has to be found that can give expression to the radical diversity in that particular dimensional manner, as well as a principle that in its own particular dimensional way can give expression to its universal coherence. All of this goes to say that the modal principles of 'sphere sovereignty' and of 'sphere-universality' constitute a special (and indeed a dimensional-modal) case of the hapantic qualification of radical diversity and of the coherence thereof.

^{152a} See section II.C.6.g.

These two principles (formulated for each cosmic dimension in a manner valid for it) allow us, on the one hand, to understand how the formation of ‘-isms’ is possible in Philosophy, and also presents us with a means of expressing fundamental (‘principled’) criticism with respect to such ‘-isms’. Let us take an example. The modal sphere of the psychic is original, radically distinctive from all other modal spheres (as well as from the qualifications of the other cosmic dimensions). But, in accordance with the coherence principle, the entire cosmos can indeed be approached from the vantage point of the psychic. An absolutisation of the psychic will mislead us to ‘see’ and interpret the entire cosmos psychologically. Criticism of psychologism will, on the one hand, remove the tendency to absolutise, but will on the other hand also emphasise the radical diversity of the cosmos — in other words, draw attention to everything else that is not as such psychic. Such criticism will show how reduction of the radical diversity of the cosmos to the psychic can lead to all kinds of antinomies in psychologism. With these last remarks we have now drawn perspectives that go beyond a discussion of the cosmic dimension of modalities.

i. My main objection to the modal law-sphere theory of the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea (as *in casu* worked out by Dooyeweerd¹⁵³) is that it tends to conflate the cosmic dimension of modalities and that of events, whereas instead they should have intersected each other perpendicularly. Modality (quality / mode of being) is no event, and vice versa, despite the degree of coherence between them. An event occurs dynamically in and with time, whereas a modal condition (the spatial nature of a triangle, the fundamental nature or ‘essential being’ of language or morality) as such does not. The anticipations and retrocipations of a modal sphere remain (qualified by the sphere’s fundamental nature) part of that sphere, whereas in the case of events, a bad tooth (belonging to the modal sphere of the biotic, *in casu* the physiological) can cause toothache (belonging to the modal psychic sphere), and fear (psychic) can cause a person to shiver (biotic, even physical); in other words, causal processes (events) transcend the boundaries of modal diversity. Let us take one more example: an anticipation can indeed be regarded as a disclosure within a particular law-sphere but will remain a form of modal (purely functional) disclosure, a modal (functional) deepening of that particular modal sphere. Actual disclosure in the cosmic dimension of events is something quite different, as can be observed in the case of, for instance, disclosure in historical continuation (development from e.g. primitive to most advanced cultures), that

¹⁵³ See footnote 148.

— within limits — can be dated, and that occurs dynamically, causally and teleically in and with concrete time^{153a}. We are obliged to keep the cosmic dimensions of modality and of events separate as two radically distinctive cosmic dimensions, despite how they might be connected (in accordance with the principle of coherence).

j. Finally, the doctrine of the modal spheres is no drawer philosophy. Imagine a tallboy with fourteen or fifteen drawers, the one on top of the other, where each of the drawers represents a modal sphere with its own fundamental nature or ‘core meaning’ and anti- and retrocipations that — qualified by its fundamental nature or the ‘core meaning’ — remains within the particular drawer. This view changes into a drawer-doctrine when the theory of modalities is attributed particular (including ‘abstract’) primacy, in the process forgetting that modal conditions are appertaining idions of idiostances, and that idiostances also share in the other three cohering cosmic dimensional qualifications. I mention this because some analyses (such as of the aesthetic, the juridical and of the lingual) create the impression that it is sufficient to only analyse the particular fundamental nature or ‘core meaning’ and to indicate all the anti- and retrocipations involved. This creates an impression of scattering / crumbling, irrespective of the value of the analysis itself.

k. This representation of the theory of modalities is — I am aware of this — incomplete and too sketchy. I can, however, not go any deeper into this matter here. I have to remark in the first place, however, that — notwithstanding my critical commentary on the theory of modal law-spheres of the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea — this Philosophy has made brilliant contributions, from which I have myself learnt much. In the second place, an approach to the cosmos (or rather idiostances) by means of the cosmic dimension of modalities has provided us with a grand and comprehensive field of inquiry that — despite what has already been achieved — calls for intensive and extensive exploitation, and whose possibilities can indeed be regarded as virtually ‘endless’. [\[Back to Contents\]](#)

^{153a} We first have to discover, according to the cosmic dimension of events, the fundamental dynamic and time-subjected nature of history. Only then should we attempt to distinguish and examine the modal types of history (history of language, economy, law, morality, and religion, etc.) as well as of the idiostantic-structural types (history of an individual, of a people, a state, a church, a university, a hospital and so on). In all these distinctions we discover that we are dealing with the meaning of history.

6. The cosmic dimension of events

I treat this subject exhaustively in another article in *volume II* of *O EN R*^{153b}. I would like to complement that article briefly with the following.

a. Any examination of events has to commence with idiostances. We observe i. a. beginning / origin and decay, becoming, movement, change, parting, combining, dilution, thickening, cause and result, external teleology and so on in matter, plant, animal and human being. We observe, among others, insemination and germination, heredity and adaptation, self (endogeneous) movement and organic activities, reproduction, development, ripening, ageing, disease, regeneration and death, internal teleological purpose in plants, animals and human beings. We observe, among others, autokinetic, psychic activities, sensory observation, representation, memory and (practical) intelligence, as well as learning processes, movement from place to place, passionate instinctive activities, searching for food, building of shelters, caring for young, internal teleological determination of purpose or aim, means and objective, *agens* and product, and so on, in animals and human beings. Only in human beings do we observe accountable, responsible self- and nature mastery leading to freedom, creation of culture (among which the actual forming of knowledge, language and art, economic goods, justice and morality, marriages, families, states, and so on), caring for persons, history, worshipping of God, and so on, and together with all of this also purposeful activities, conscience, following a calling or vocation, actualising a destiny, et cetera. In all this differentiation of events we have to keep in mind, however, that the human being, animal, plant and matter are all whole idiostantic unities - also with respect to all the events that each of them are involved in (or which they respectively perform). By virtue of their idiostantic unities, the various seemingly similar or common types of activities they are involved in are not identical but rather analogous. Let us consider one example, namely of the physical movement in matter, plant, animal and human being. The physical movement of matter is exclusively physical; that of a plant's root is co-determined by organic determinants; that of an animal that walks is co-determined by organic and psychic determinants; the physical movements of the fingers of a human being playing the piano are co-determined by organic, psychic and especially gnōtic (knowing), aesthetic (appreciating art), self- and instrument mastering as well as other culture forming determinants¹⁵⁴.

^{153b} Also see my *B. en M.*

¹⁵⁴ See my *B. en M.*

- b. In the second place, we have to examine the coherent diversity of the law-order for dynamic events in matter, plant, animal and humankind.
- c. In doing all of this, we have to delve into the contingent nature of dynamic events.
- d. In the cosmic dimension of modalities we were able to distinguish modal anticipations and modal retrocipations. In the hierarchy of modalities, the former point upwards, and the latter point downwards. It strikes us that in the cosmic dimension of events we can also distinguish two directions — regarding events, namely causes (dynamic designations *a tergo*) and purposes (dynamic designations *ad finem*).
- e. Each of the cosmic dimensions are grounded in two principles, one that relates to the radical diversity, and one that relates to the coherence in this diversity. The cosmic dimension of modalities is subject (as the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea has correctly indicated) to respectively the principles of ‘sphere sovereignty’ and ‘sphere-universality’. If we understood the word ‘freedom’ as widely / freely as possible, in a positive sense as activity according to its own nature, and negatively as unbridled activity, then the respective principles of ‘freedom according to its competence’ and ‘universal dependence on its competence’ apply in the cosmic dimension of events (appropriate to matter, plant, animal and human being).¹⁵⁵
- f. Finally we encounter time in the cosmic dimension of events. The entire cosmos is conditioned by time^{155a}. Matter, plant, animal and human being all share time, each in its own way. The ontic primary time is transience / fleetingness in the cosmos. Time is grounded in this as duration and prolongation / continuance. And in this, time is grounded in the form of succession (earlier and later), rhythm and sequence. And in this, in turn, time is grounded as perspective, in other words as past, present and future. And finally, the cosmic time is grounded in all of the preceding (embracing all the preceding)^{155b}. In addition to all of this comes the distinction between ‘inversal’ locative time (time as a point in time) and the ‘inversal’ longitudinal time (as duration). In addition to all of this, we have to distinguish between original and instituted time, and with reference to the latter, between real and fictitious time (as in chronometer time, because a second or an hour is a fiction). Time reveals to us an extraordinarily rich diversity of

¹⁵⁵ See my *Die Wysbegeerte van die Skeppingsidee* (De Bussy, 1933), and my *B. en M.*

^{155a} Time-stipulation is something different from temporality (fleetingness).

^{155b} Dooyeweerd’s conception of cosmic time is not the same as mine.

coherent time forms¹⁵⁶. It is therefore important to first examine statements such as: each human being (indeed, each thing, plant and animal — each in its own way) 'has his or her own time'; 'his or her time has not yet come'; 'take note of the signs of the times'. Special cognisance has to be taken of the contingency here — a contingency that presupposes the creative will of God, but which is also immediately (or directly) connected with the guiding will of God. And what about the exquisite issue of time and eternity? As well as that of the subjectedness of everything that exists to the transience of time? And also that of the possibility of human mastery of time, given human beings' subjectedness to it? Because the time of human beings is a creaturely reflection of the eternity of God.

At any rate, where there is time, there is event; where there is event, there is also time. We can know event and time (in their differences as well as in their internal coherence) to a certain degree only by approaching it from the cosmic dimension of events. The cosmic dimension of modalities cannot reveal time to us. This does not mean that modalities are eternal; they are and will always remain in-self-sufficient, creaturely. It only means that, in our examination of modalities as such, we have to relevantly and selectively set aside the time-stipulations of idiosyncrasies. This means that modal conditions *as such* (e.g. $2 + 2 = 4$; a triangle is constituted of three sides and three angles) are totally creaturely as well as a-temporal. Because we cannot separate cosmic dimensions and because one cosmic dimension refers to another, we have to find out how the cosmic dimension of modalities (in modally qualified fashion) refers to events and therefore also to time, such as we find in, for example, the sequence of premise and conclusion in logical argument, or in the functional determination of the *moral* result of a human act following a *moral* motive.

g. We are confronted with still more issues with respect to the cosmic dimension of events. We have to keep in mind, however, that this dimension is a universal side of the entire cosmos and therefore of matter, plant, animal and human being. [\[Back to Contents\]](#)

¹⁵⁶ See my articles on time in *Tyd in Tydskrif vir Wetenskap en Kuns* (new series), VIII, 1 en VIII, 2.

7. The cosmic dimension of (individual and social) idiostantic structures^{156a}

a. We already noted that structuredness is a hapantic qualification of the cosmos. Our discussion of the cosmic dimension of (individual and social) idiostantic structures has to begin once again with the concrete idiostances — matter, plant, animal and human being — more to the point, with an investigation into their structuredness. We are not dealing here, in the case of this cosmic dimension, with complete idiostances but only with idiostances as structural wholes, in other words as a universal side.

b.i. We commence by considering some of the distinctions made by the *Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea*. From an idiostantic-structural viewpoint, we can distinguish between matter, plant, animal and human being as *radical types*. In plants and animals, we can distinguish *genotypes* within each radical type. We can also distinguish *variability* (or ‘*pheno-*’) types in plants, animals and human beings. Variability types contain, in our opinion, inter-dimensional references to the cosmic dimension of events (not only to the external factors that, according to Dooyeweerd, determine the variations in question). The distinction among human beings in terms of marriage, family, nation, state, church and so on, can in our opinion not be referred to as genotypes within the radical type human being. The differences in race could be regarded as variability types; the different types of state (patriarchal, feudal, class, monarchical, democratic, national, corporative and dictatorial) could also be regarded as variability types. We can hardly use the terms ‘*geno-*’ and ‘*variability-*’ types in the current natural sciences. And finally, our term for what the *Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea* calls individuality structures would be idiostantic structures.

b.ii. Our next distinction is between the *individual* and *social* sides of an idiostance and their inherent connectedness. We begin with the human being. The human being is an individual-social particularity, in other words he or she has a mutually unbreachable individual and social aspect — as entire human being. his or her individual side is not reducible to his or her social side, and vice versa. It would be an abstraction to see the human being primarily or exclusively as an individual or primarily or exclusively as a social ‘being’ (say, in terms of a nation). Not only differences in gender but also all the relationships between human beings, including membership of social / societal relationships (marriage, family, nation, state, etc.) reveal to us that human beings do not only possess an individual side but also a social one. his or her individual and social

^{156a} See my *B. en M.*

sides are equally fundamental, and therefore ontically equivalent. One side cannot be isolated from the other. We should therefore not understand a human being primarily as either an individual ‘being’, or primarily as a social ‘being’; he or she is an individual-social particularity.

It is clear from the above, that ‘social’ should be understood as a relationship (a structural stipulation) among idiosyncrasies, *in casu* among human beings; that the social is no modal capacity (a mode of being), and that we should not search for it in the cosmic dimension of modalities, but rather in that of idiosyncratic structures. We will, however, understand the term ‘social’ (for lack of a better term) in the wide sense of a particular relationship between idiosyncrasies, not only among human beings, but also among animals, among plants, and among ‘matter’ (or ‘material things’).

This should not create any serious difficulties with respect to animals and plants. We may refer to the symbiosis among plants and animals (such as plant- and animal colonies, the parasitical coexistence of host and guest, etc.) as ‘social’^{156b}. It is therefore correct to refer to botanical and zoological *sociology*. To extend the ‘social’ also to matter and to speak of social relationships (among, for instance, protons, neutrons, electrons; atom nuclei; the field theories involved, and so on) might, on the other hand, seem like stretching the meaning of the term. However, if we took notice of the radical distinctiveness of the ‘social’ in the radical types matter, plant, animal and human being, it would make sense to refer analogously also in the material world to ‘social’. Matter, plant, animal and human being do not only possess an individual side but also and concomitantly an unbreachable ‘social’ side. None of these idiosyncrasies is purely ‘individual’, each demands a fundamental relationship with the others. (Should we decide to reserve the term ‘social’ for human beings — or also for animals, we will find ourselves compelled to coin another term for the side of matter, plant, animal and human being that necessarily implies a relationship with others). It is for all these reasons that we speak of the cosmic dimension of *individual and social* idiosyncratic structures.

b.iii. We need to make a third distinction. We will limit our attention to the human being, albeit that this distinction can be made also with respect to animal, plant and matter. Looked at idiosyncratic-structurally, each human being (person) does not only fundamentally possess a (mutually indissoluble) individual and social side, but human

^{156b} Of course, the ‘social’ in human beings is radically different from that in animals.

beings (people) also create *social / societal / communal relationships*¹⁵⁷, for instance, a marriage, a family, a nation, a state or a church, an industry, an association, a school, a research institute, and so on. Each of these social / societal relationships possesses — in accordance with its nature, structure, task or destination — a structural unity that is more than the sum of (the mechanical connections between) its parts. And then again, the human being is (as individual-social particularity) a nodal point in and for all the different social / societal relationships of which he or she is a member. This implies that a person (as individual-social particularity) is never entirely dissolved into a particular social / societal relationship (as member of such a relationship). He or she only becomes involved in it insofar as it is required by the nature, structure and the destination of the social / societal relationship in question. This distinction is of fundamental importance¹⁵⁸. (By the way: the fact that the human being is the nodal point of the social / societal relationships of which he or she is a member, is another clear indication that the human being is never purely an individual, but rather both fundamentally individual and social at one and the same time.)

What we have said so far has brought several difficult and complex philosophical issues to the surface. We can, however, not enter into these issues. We only mentioned those aspects to serve as a backdrop for what will now follow. We have to bear in mind that when we examine matter, plant, animal and the human being idiosyncratically, we are not dealing with idiosyncrasies *in toto*, each possessing all its cosmic dimensional sides, expressing itself in them and thereby becoming more than the sum of its dimensional sides; we are dealing here only with the *entire* material thing, the *entire* plant, the *entire* animal and the *entire* human being viewed from only one of its universal sides, namely that of its *idiosyncratic structure*.

c.i. An investigation of matter, plant, animal and human being from the idiosyncratic-structural side, i.e. each from its individual side (as distinctive individual), with the focus on the fixed structure of each, will reveal that matter partakes of the modalities of the arithmetical, the spatial and the ‘physical’; plants partake of all three of these as well as

¹⁵⁷ What here is referred to as ‘social / societal / communal relationships’, I used to refer to as ‘co-existence’ or ‘community relationships’. They are now simply referred to as ‘social relationships’ to preempt the literal criticism that a ‘community relationship’ seems to imply that all its members necessarily have to live together — something that can hardly be said of for instance race. Some of the social relationships (e.g. marriage, family, church) may indeed be referred to as ‘communities’. We do not enter into finer distinctions here. See my *B.en M.*

¹⁵⁸ See my *B.en M.*, *Stryd om die ordes* (Administratiewe Buro van die Gereformeerde Kerk, Potchefstroom, 1942) and my article in *Koers* XXXI, 9.

in the biotic(al); animals in all four mentioned so far plus the psychic(al); and the human being in all five mentioned so far plus the logical, the lingual and aesthetical, the economical, juridical and ethical as well as the religious. Our investigation also reveals that (if looked at from an idiostant-structural side each of them is a whole, in other words, as a unit that embodies all the modal conditions (i.e., a structure that is more than the sum of the modalities of which it partakes); and not only that the highest modality (the religious in human beings, the psychic(al) in animals, the biotic(al) in plants, and the 'physical' in matter) is also the leading^{158a} one, but also that in every case where two or more of the idiostances share a particular modality, the modality in question tends to differ in the various idiostantic structures; this is because of the differences in the structural unity of the respective idiostances as well as because of the presence of the other modalities which one idiostance might partake of, and the other not.

Concerning the latter, let us consider one example. Human beings and animals both partake of the psychic(al) mode of being: despite this, the psychic(al) aspect of human beings differs from that of animals because the psychic(al) in human beings belongs to the structural unity of human beings and is co-determined by modalities of which animals do not partake, whereas the psychic(al) aspect in animals is part of the structural unity of the animal but cannot be co-determined by modalities that animals lack. Because of the co-determination of the (vertical) hierarchy of modalities in this modally-fixed idiostantic structural unity of respectively matter, plant, animal and human being, we refer to this unity as a *vertical idiostantic structural unity*. The Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea provided brilliant results with its investigations into what it refers to as individuality structures (not: idiostantic structures). But also in the case of this structural problem, this Philosophy (*in casu* Dooyeweerd) allowed the modal-structural and the dynamic to coalesce, whereas we prefer to distinguish between them. We have to distinguish between the *vertical* (from a modal perspective) idiostantic structural unity, and the *dynamic* idiostantic structural unity. Although we distinguish between them, idiostantic structural unity does not allow us to separate them from each other¹⁵⁹.

^{158a} It is fundamentally important to distinguish between the modal *leading or guiding function* (with a vertical analysis of an individual or a social idiostantic structure) and *destination* (with a dynamic analysis of such a structure).

¹⁵⁹ Cf. my *Iets oor Kousaliteit* and my *Iets oor Kousaliteitskennis* in *Philosophia Reformata* II, 2 and III, 1 (Kok, Kampen) and *Iets oor Kousaliteit en Kousaliteitskennis* in *Tydskrif vir Wetenskap en Kuns* (new series, II, 1).

c.ii. As far as the *dynamic idiostantic structural unity* is concerned — and once again, we will limit our attention to the human being — we note that the unity of the human person is determined by hereditary, environmental and milieu factors, by his or her specific talents and ‘experience’, and by his or her inherited or acquired character traits, the complex interplay of endogenous, dynamic factors (including e.g. that of inclination, feeling, will, intelligence, etc.), and in which the initiative of his or her ego as well as servitude to certain factors, and so on, should be recognized. We are not dealing here with everything revealed by the cosmic dimension of events as such but only with the dynamic idiostantic structural unity thereof, in other words, with the dynamic structural unity of a particular human being.

c.iii. We are examining the concrete idiostance (*in casu* the human being as an individual) idiostant-structurally. In the process, we distinguish in this idiostantic structure its (modal-) vertical as well as dynamic structural nature; we cannot separate them from each other, but have to examine their internal connectedness. The same applies also for an examination of the idiostantic structure of social / societal relationships.

c.iv. Idiostant-structural examination of social / societal relationships / groups (and once again we limit our attention to the human being) reveals the presence of yet another structural condition (alongside the vertical and the dynamic), viz. the *horizontal idiostantic structural unity*. This threefold distinction of structural unity is essential; also in this case they are inseparable but cohere inherently. We will now explain this distinction with reference to the idiostantic structure of the state.

c.v. The state is an institute (a social / societal relationship / circle) consisting of the government (an authority) and subjects, and its purpose (destination) is the creation and maintenance of a juridical inter-order among individuals, among individuals and social relationships / groups, and among social / societal relationships themselves, in a specific territory^{159a}.

The Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea has provided us with the valuable insight that a social / societal relationship — *in casu* the state — possesses (in our terms) a *vertical* structural unity; and also that this unity structure embraces modal conditions (more than

^{159a} We can add to this that, whereas the state has the purpose of regulating the *universal* juridical *inter-order* (its core purpose), other social / societal relationships have the task of regulating a *particular intra-order* as a *means* to a purpose, and also that (in certain cases) the state may (or may not) assume supporting duties (for instance, in the case of state-supported universities) as well as additional duties (such as postal services, telephone services, telegraph services, primary and secondary education).

the sum of its modal conditions), of which in this stipulated unity one of the modalities has a leading or guiding function, and another the founding function. This is the *first* structural problem.

According to this Philosophy, the *juridical* is the modally leading function of the state. We fully agree with this view. This Philosophy then sees the historical as the modal foundational function of the state. In our opinion, this cannot be, because the historical is no modality. The historic(al) falls under the cosmic dimension of events. The structure of the state is founded in *territorium* (in other words, the ‘physical’). This can be deduced from the fact that no Jewish state existed before the Jewish nation acquired its own *territorium* (Israel) in which it could exert and maintain law and order.

In the *second* place, the structure of a social / societal relationship / group (*in casu* of the state) is also *dynamically* determined. We were required to take into account distinctions provided by the cosmic dimension of modalities with respect to the vertical idiostantic structural unity of the state. With respect to the dynamic idiostantic structural unity of the state, we are now also required to take into account the distinctions offered by the cosmic dimension of events. The idiostantic structure of the state requires both the vertical and the dynamic conditions of unity in their mutual and unbreachable solidarity. According to the dynamic idiostant-structural unity conditions, the *destination*^{159b}, the purpose, of the state is to regulate the inter-individual order among individuals, among individuals and social / societal relationships / groups, and among the social / societal relationships themselves. (This is a juridical order, according to the modal or vertical idiostantic structural unity; the juridical is the *leading* function here; but regulating the universal inter-order as aim or purpose is a dynamic idiostant-structural qualification; we cannot refer to ‘leading’ here, but rather to *destination*.) The following falls under the dynamic-idiostantic structural unity of the state: *state power and authority*, and also for example the historically determined state forms (such as patriarchal, feudal, class, monarchical, democratic corporative and dictatorial states); and also for instance the conditions of tradition and progression insofar as they are idiostant-structurally relevant.

In the *third* place, we find citizens of the state in relationships with one another, such as subjects of the state among themselves, government people / people in authority among themselves and with citizens of the state. Each one of these is a complete person in the

^{159b} See footnote 158. Here we restrict our focus to destination in structural context. The destination of actual state actions falls under the cosmic dimension of events.

sense that he or she shares in the modal-vertical and the dynamic idiostant-structural unity conditions. As such, each of them is involved in certain relationships with all the others. These social / societal relationships reveal to us the *horizontal* idiostantic structural unity of the state¹⁶⁰. (This applies *mutatis mutandis* also to the relationship between an authority and the social relationship / group insofar as it is enkaptically intertwined with the state, in other words insofar as it falls under the regulation of juridical inter-order.) The horizontal idiostantic structural unity has to be sharply distinguished from the vertical and the dynamic-idiostantic structural unities, despite the fact that the former can not be isolated from the latter, in other words they all cohere in an internally unbreachable bond. Relationships of authority come into play in the context of the horizontal (social) idiostantic structural unity of a social / societal relationship / group.

The state as an idiostantic structure is therefore an inherently coherent unity of *vertical*, *dynamic* and *horizontal* structural qualification¹⁶¹. What we see here with respect to the state, we will find *mutatis mutandis* also in the case of other human social / societal structures or relationships; not only in those of human beings, but also in those of the other idiostances¹⁶². It stands to reason that with these few brief remarks we have now posited a wide array of issues that require further intensive and extensive investigation.

¹⁶⁰ A marriage, for instance (and with it, the spouses as total persons), shares vertically in all the modalities (in accordance with the vertical hierarchy of the modalities), with the ethical as the leading and the biotic(al) as the foundational modal function. In a marriage, we also have the social (horizontal) relationship of the husband with his wife (and vice versa) as total persons. This horizontal structural unity of the marriage cuts the vertical perpendicularly, as it were.

¹⁶¹ I learnt the method of a *vertical* structural analysis of a social relationship from the *Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea*. But because this Philosophy (*in casu* Dooyeweerd) conflates the modally fixed and dynamic, the *dynamic* structural unity of a social relationship can hardly become a particular problem (i.e. different from a structure-analytical problem); this Philosophy does not, in fact, accept the cosmic dimension of events. In this Philosophy, the *horizontal* structural unity of a social relationship is approached from the vertical and therefore cannot be done justice to; this is evident from its analysis of authority.

¹⁶² Take for example a bee colony. *Vertically* idiostant-structurally, it shares in the arithmetical, the spatial, the ‘physic(al)’, the biotic(al) and (as leading function) the psychic(al). *Horizontally* idiostant-structurally, we find its unity in the social relationship of queen, workers and drones. *Dynamically* idiostant-structurally, we find the unity in the instinctively determined activities (such as the gathering of the honey), as well as in the difference between wild and domesticated bees, in the beginning of varieties, in the different ways of hive building, and so on.

We can, in other words, approach a bee colony from three (mutually irreducible) sides. But — and this is important — the idiostantic structural unity of a bee colony is a whole that is more than the sum of its vertical, dynamic and social structural units, and we cannot / should not separate any one of the three from the others, although we can / should distinguish between them. For such a distinction, we should not, however, lose sight of the whole and also not of the relation of one structural unity with the other two. We have to keep a sharp eye on all three of the (mutually irreducible) structural unities.

d. How should we now approach the unity of the domain of matter (of material idiosyncrasies), of the plant, the animal and the human being¹⁶³? We limit ourselves once again to a discussion of the human being.

The one extreme end of our distinction (rather: the one pole) is the human being as an individual-social particularity. The other is the unity of humanity. Concerning the unity of humanity as the other extreme, the Word of God distinguishes between the unity according to ancestry ('out of one blood') — as well as the unity of the human race reborn in Christ.

In between these two poles we find several social / societal relationships that can range from rather loose to rather fixed.

Primary social / societal relationships include for instance marriage, family, a people, nation, state, and church. i. The *modal-leading* function of marriage, family, a people, nation (or state-nation) is moral / ethical care of the person, that of the state is the juridical, and that of the church the religious function¹⁶⁴. The *modal foundational* function of marriage, family and a people is (in different ways) the biotic(al) (respectively gender, blood bonds and ancestry), of the state and the nation (not the historical because it is no modal stipulation, but rather) the physical (the *territorium*), and of the church (not the historical, but rather) the ethical / moral^{164a}. ii. The (dynamic structure-determining) task, purpose and *destination* of each differ from all the others; the destination of the family is, among others, education; that of the state, the regulating of inter-order; and that of the church, among others, the service of the Word. iii. The *social (or horizontal)* idiosyncratic

¹⁶³ Dooyeweerd indeed accepts the notion of a domain of material things, of plants and of animals, but not of human beings. This coheres with the fact that he sees the heart of the human being as supra-temporal, as the subjective concentration point of the time-subject cosmic (sic! – cosmos? – *translator*), and in Christ (according to his human nature) sees the meaning totality of the cosmos, whereby in Christ the unity of the reborn human race is grounded. Vollenhoven (*Isagogè Philosophiae*) does speak of a domain of human beings.

¹⁶⁴ and ^{164a}. The *Philosophy of the Cosmopolitan Idea* sees the pisteutic (faith) as the modal leading function and the historical as the modal foundational function of the church. It stands to reason, in our opinion, that the religious function should be the leading function of the church. The historical is, however, no modality and falls under the cosmic dimension of events. In our opinion, the moral / ethical should be seen as the foundational function of the church. The ethical entails care of the person and has to do with the relationship between human being and human being. That the church should be seen as a religious-ethical institute (in the sense of leading and grounding modal conditions) can be observed among others in the distinction between the offices of elders and deacons, in the service of the Word on the one hand and the brotherly-sisterly relationship among the members on the other hand, in the two-sided application of the love commandment (also in the church), and also in the relationship of the faithful with Christ as God and as human being.

structure of each differs from all the others as can be observed in the mutual relationships between husband and wife in a marriage, of father, mother, brother and sister in the family, of the members of a people, citizens of a state among themselves, of nationals among themselves, and of members of a church among themselves; also the authority structure of each differs from all the others (respectively: husband and wife, parents and children, leaders of a people and followers, state authority and subject, national leaders and their followers, church council and members of the church). These primary social / societal relationships are structurally the most fixed and stable, and we refer to them as communities.

A group of professionals, an association, a school, a university, an industry, a hospital, the press, and so on, are all *secondary social / societal relationships*. They are all structurally looser relationships. i. Some of them have one and others more than one *modal leading function*, some have a *modal foundational function* and others not. ii. Each of them has a (dynamic structure-determining) *destination* (task, purpose). iii. Each also has its own *social (horizontal)* structure, including authority structure.

The *tertiary social / societal relationships* are the loosest / most informal, as can be seen in friendship circles and in neighbourliness. i. The *leading modal* function of friendship is the ethical, but it has no *foundational modal* function, whereas neighbourliness has such a *modal function* (physical boundaries), but not necessarily a *modal leading function*. ii. The (structure-determining) *destination* of a circle of friends / friendship is, among others, friendly intercourse. Neighbourliness does not necessarily have a destination, except maybe in a negative sense (of respecting the boundaries between *them*). iii. A circle of friends has its own *social (horizontal)* relationship; neighbourliness, not necessarily -- there is no authority relationship in any of these two forms of social relationships.

The *secondary and tertiary social relationships* are social circles, and together we refer to them as society, or the community in general.

In between the social / societal relationships on the one hand, and the individual (as individual-social particularity) on the other, we find several inter-individual relationships (e.g. between people in the street). We also find inter-social / societal (e.g. international) relationships, for instance among nations or states, irrespective of whether they enter into diplomatic relations or not.

Also interspersed in the above mentioned social relationships and the unity of humankind, we find some widely embracing relationships (in which the social relationships can be rather loose or relatively fixed), such as the different ecumenes¹⁶⁵ and races.

This distinction opens another wide field of investigation.

e. We find *relationships of authority* in the primary and the secondary social / societal relationships (but not in the tertiary), and therefore also a distinction and relationship between people in authority (i.e. authorities) and people subject to that authority (i.e. subjects). The office of authority (as horizontal (social / societal) idiostantic structural qualification) is ‘essentially, fundamentally’ inherent in the particular social / societal relationship¹⁶⁶. It has been remarked in theological terms that human beings possess delegated authority derived from the absolute authority of God. It would have been better to state that human authority (the authority of somebody in authority — a human being — over someone that is subject to that authority — including a human being as (an) authority) finds its origins in God; in this sense, authority is not something invented or thought out by a human being, but rather a creaturely structural stipulation of a particular social / societal relationship. This is the vantage point from which we have to philosophically approach the issue of authority¹⁶⁷. The office of authority belongs to a particular social / societal relationship, irrespective of how a person (dynamically) comes into that particular office (through monarchical throne-succession, by birth, through democratic elections, through violent conquest, through the recognition of a person’s leadership qualities, and so on).

¹⁶⁵ See my article *Hoe is ons roeping wêreldwyd?* in Volume I of O. en R. with reference to ‘ecumenes’.

¹⁶⁶ See my *Praktiese Calvinisme* (radio talks), Pro Rege-Pers Bpk., 1956. The office connected with authority is a structural principle of a particular social / communal relationship. In terms of its structure, the particular relationship/group requires persons bearing authority and others obedient to authority. The relationship of authority forms an inherent ‘ingredient’ of the creaturely order of the particular social/communal relationship / group as such.

¹⁶⁷ Authority is, in the first place, not a modal (e.g. juridical) condition and should therefore not in the first place be sought in the vertical idiostantic structural unity of a relationship. Authority is given together with the mutual relationship of ‘whole’ people in a particular social relationship, and should therefore be sought in the first place in the horizontal idiostantic structural unity of the relevant social relationship. Only then can it be established as to whether authority has its leading function in the religious, and its foundational function in the ethical (which is the case in the church as an institution), its leading in the ethical and its foundational in the biotic(al) (as in a family) and its leading in the juridical and foundational function in the physical — or territorium (such as a state). Important here is the insight that the grounding function of a social relationship also sets boundaries to its authority, for instance that of a state to its territorium (the physical).

Failure to recognise the (horizontal) idiostant-structural unity of a social / societal relationship might lead to the error of (always) searching for the modal foundation of authority in the juridical. The ground of authority is, however, situated in the horizontal idiostantic structural unity of a particular social / societal relationship. As such, it may indeed be modally-juridically qualified, as in the case of state authority. But parental authority, for instance, as such is modally-morally /-ethically, and ecclesiastical authority modally-religiously (pistically) qualified. However, the idiostantic structure of authority is more complex than this. The authority of a state's government may be juridically qualified, but it also possesses under the guidance or leadership of the juridical qualification a moral authority as well as — still under the guidance or leadership of the juridical — economic authority (with regards to national housekeeping). Parental authority may indeed be modally qualified by the ethical, but it also possesses — under guidance and leadership of the ethical qualification — juridical and economic authority, for example. Authority has this complex structure because human social / societal relationships / groups (in accordance with the vertical idiostantic structural unity) share in all the modal normative conditions, and also because authority pertains to all normative decisions though always under the guidance and leadership of the particular modal authority qualification as determined by the particular leading modality in a particular social /societal relationship.

Authority is also idiostant-structurally connected to the normative conditions of the dynamic idiostant-structural unity, as given in the destination (task and purpose) of the social / societal relationship in question.

Authority is positively limited (vertically, horizontally and dynamically) by the idiostantic structure of a societal / social relationship. The authority of a state government is limited to its subjects (horizontal structure) co-existing in a particular area of land (basic modality in the vertical structure), and only to its particular task or destination (dynamic structure). According to this last stipulation, the authority of a state^{167a} is limited to the regulation of inter-order among individuals, among individuals and social relationships, and among social / societal relationships / groups as such; is not allowed to interfere

^{167a} The purpose (together with its primary task) of the state is regulating the *universal* (juridical) *inter-order* among individuals, individuals and social/communal relationships, and among social / communal relationships themselves. Each of the other social/communal relationships regulates its own *particular intra-order* as a *means* for achieving its purpose (its actual task). For instance, the regulation of order in a family or in an industry amounts to the regulation of a *particular intra-order as means* for performing their tasks of respectively education and production.

with the regulating of the intra-order in a marriage, a family, a church^{167b}and so on. The authority of a church council is limited to its particular members (horizontal structure) who, as brothers and sisters, are involved in an ethical (and religiously-pistically deepened) relationship with one another (basic modality in the vertical structure) and also to its particular task and destination (dynamic structure). Parental authority is limited to the children — biotically — conceived by them (basic modality in the vertical structure) and to their educational task or destination (dynamic structure). Et cetera.

f. Each human social / societal relationship also possesses *power* as determined by its dynamic, idiostantic structural unit. Power is the strength / force / might that human beings possess. We have to distinguish between several types of strength (*in casu*: power). There is physical power (we can think here of the fatherly rod, or the power of the sword of the state), psychic power, logical power of argument, the power of the word, economic power, ethical power, power of faith and so on. All these types cohere. Each social / societal relationship possesses — viewed idiostantic-structurally — all these different types of power, in different ways and in accordance with their respective destinations. Power is a dynamic medium available to all individuals and social / societal relationships / groups for completing their respective tasks. ‘Subject the earth and govern over all that lives’ is not possible without power. The application of power is normatively subject to the relevant modal and destinational conditions. This is because power is a medium for reaching an aim, and aims are normatively determined. The same applies for the assertion of authority in a social / societal relationship — power as a medium is subject to the normative provisions of authority. The application of power is at the same time limited to the idiostant-structural horizontal, vertical and dynamic boundaries of authority in a particular social / societal relationship. The application of state power by the government is, for instance, restricted to its subjects (citizens), subject to the modal norms of the juridical (as well as other norms under the leadership of the juridical qualification) and other norms related to the duties of the state — its destination (its primary task or purpose is the regulation of inter-order). The assertion of authority (including for example the loving — and therefore ethical / moral — assertion of authority by parents) would indeed not be possible without power. It has to be borne in mind that all assertion of authority, as well as application of power by a person in authority, and also the obedience to authority by those subject to authority presupposes

^{167b} Apart from supporting and additional tasks. See footnote 159a.

not only accountability and responsibility in the person in authority but especially also in those subject to that authority.

All of this goes to illustrate that the distinction and relationship between authority and power — in structural terms — are of great significance for understanding the idiostantic structure of a human social / societal relationship.

We do not find authority and power in animals, plants and matter, only diverse forms of force.

g. Concerning the *coherence of idiosyncrasies*, we have already drawn attention to the fact that idiosyncrasies each possess both an individual and a social ‘side’; also to the fact that an idiosyncrasy (for instance the human being) can be the nodal point of various different social / societal relationships; that each social relationship possesses a uniformity of structure that embraces all of its members (more than the sum of its parts); but also that an idiosyncrasy (for instance a human being) is a member of a particular social / societal relationship not as a total person but rather as a complete / whole person, and only insofar as this is required by the vertical, dynamic and horizontal idiostantic structural unity of the particular social relationship.

The enkapsis theory of the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea offers valuable insights as far as the idiostant-structural relationships of idiosyncrasies (individuals and social / societal relationships) are concerned. Enkapsis is, according to this theory, an intertwinement of ‘individuality structures’ (we prefer: idiostantic structures), where each retains its unique identity. For example, a marriage is enkaptically intertwined with a family, without the former losing its identity; physical-chemical matter is enkaptically bound into the physiology of a plant without the former losing its identity. There are many forms of enkapsis, among others those of individual and social relationship, of social / societal relationships / groups such as between a people / a nation and a state, and so on. Also ecological structural intertwinement should be mentioned. The intertwinement of, for instance, a human being with his or her (physical, cultural and social) world is idiostant-structurally different from that of the animal with its ‘Umwelt’. Having said all of this, we have to reiterate that we have been focusing only on structural intertwinements, and not on all the other relationships that we find among idiosyncrasies, such as can be observed according to the cosmic dimension of events (with its causes and qualifications of purpose, as well as the course of time).

h. Of the remaining structural issues, we only mention those given with the ‘subject’-object relationship, in connection with which the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea has also made important analyses and produced results. A pencil, viewed from a modal idiostant-structural perspective, is an *object* that I — as *subject* — observe, and a nest is an *object* that a bird — as *subject* — observes. However, viewed dynamically idiostant-structurally, the pencil is a *product* manufactured by a human being as *agens* and used as a *means* by a human being for achieving a specific purpose, whereas the nest is a *product* made by the bird and used (auto-kinetically) as a *means* of achieving a specific aim. The subject-object relation is not reducible to that of *agens* and *product*, and also not to that of *means* and *purpose / aim*.¹⁶⁸ The structural subject-object theory should therefore be idiostant-structurally complemented with a structural *agens*-*product* and a *means*-*purpose* theory. This applies to idiostantic structures because we encounter the distinctions *agens* and *product*, as well as *means* and *purpose*, also in the cosmic dimension of events. It is also interesting to note that matter, plant and animals can become objects in those modalities in which they themselves do not directly share as idiostances. A tree (to borrow an example from Dooyeweerd) can be a logical (think about) object, a lingual object, a (beautiful or ugly) aesthetic object, an economic object, a juridical object (this is my tree, not yours), an ethical / moral object, and a religious object, depending on the circumstances. It is also interesting that, viewed dynamic-idiostant-structurally, matter can be a means for a plant, matter and plant for an animal, and matter, plant and animal for a human being, but not vice versa; and that it would be a violation of a person’s humanity (human be-ing) to be used by another human being as a means for achieving a certain goal.

i. All the (individual and social) idiostantic structures that we discussed here, as well as all other distinguishable and coherent idiostantic structures, are subject to the relevant (distinctive and coherent) structural laws that apply to them.

j. Our outline of what we could encounter in terms of the cosmic dimension of (individual and social) idiostantic structures has been sketchy; its purpose was mainly to help us discover the relevant issues rather than trying to solve them. In the process, we have seen that this is a huge field that awaits intensive and extensive examination^{168a}.

¹⁶⁸See my *B. en M.*, ch. 18, 29 and 32.

^{168a} The substance problem related to this is posited in section III.C.13.b.

k. In the case of the cosmic dimension of modalities, we posited the principle of ‘sphere-sovereignty’ for expressing the radical diversity of the cosmos, and in the case of the cosmic dimension of events, we posited the principle of ‘freedom of its own competence’. Concerning the coherence in radical diversity, we posited in the case of the cosmic dimension of modalities, the principle of ‘sphere-universality’, and in the case of the cosmic dimension of events, that of ‘universal dependence of its own competence’. Regarding the cosmic dimension of (individual and social) idiostantic structures, the principle of radical diversity stands as *‘the irreducible identity of the own idiostantic structure’*, and the principle of coherence of radical diversity stands as *‘the universal interwinement of the own structure with that of other idiostantic structures’*.

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8. *The cosmic dimension of values*¹⁶⁹

a We begin once again with concrete matter, plant, animal and humankind. They are good or bad, depending on what they are or what they do. The qualification ‘good’ and ‘bad’ are called values. Values can be either positive (‘good’) or negative / worthless (‘bad’). We already posited (in section C.4.b.vii.) that the entire cosmos (matter, plant, animal and humankind) shares in value (positive and / or negative value). Values also form a universal side of the cosmos. There is a cosmic dimension of values.

The above implies the ontic existence of values. They also exist independently from human knowledge¹⁷⁰ or desire. Theories that subjectivise values as such by regarding them as dependent on human knowledge or desire (and even will) are mistaken. Let us consider only one example: the loyalty of one’s friend exists whether one is aware of it or not, or whether one desires it or not.

b. Each value presupposes a bearer (an idiostance or appertaining idion). A value only exists as a qualification of its bearer. We may not refer to the bearer of a value as a

¹⁶⁹ See my *B. en M.*, ch. 18 (p. 178 et seq.).

¹⁷⁰ We learn to know values in two ways. a. Indirectly through insight into norms and the application of a norm in a special case. b. Directly through an immediate (emotional-appraising, intuitive-cognitive) sounding / testing of value (or non-value). See my article on morality / the ethical in *Volume I* of *O en R*; compare the spontaneous validation that we find in happiness, gratitude, etc. about something. This does not exclude the possibility that our knowledge of values can be subjectively counterfeited. We may encounter value sounding or validation by people just as *mutatis mutandis* we could in the case of their colour perception: adaptation, dulling, (simultaneous and successive) contrast, illusion, hallucination, etc.

value. This becomes evident when we distinguish between (for instance) something (such as a painting) and its value (aesthetically pleasing). The painting (a thing or goods that bear value) can be destroyed; the value cannot be destroyed; on the other hand, the value exists only as the value of that particular painting. Values may not be ‘autonomised’ (made independent) and still less be absolutised; they enjoy no independent and absolute existence, such as for instance has been supposed to be the case in the speculative Platonic realm of ideas.

c. Values can be categorised in various ways. A division according to their bearers would yield the following: *a*. Material values, plant values, animal values, human values; *b.i*. according to the cosmic dimension of modality: religious, ethical, social, juridical, aesthetical, life values; *b.ii*. according to the cosmic dimension of events: means and purpose values, also values connected with temper, desire, will, education, with an historic event, and so on; *b.iii*. according to the dimension of (individual and social) idiostantic structures: values pertaining to individuals, social values, family values, national values, and so on. In mentioning all of these categories, we have to bear in mind that values are antithetically distinguishable as either positive or negative (non-value / worthless).

d. One knows what the colour quality green is, but it is difficult to explain to a blind person what the colour green actually is; one also knows what value is, but it is difficult to say what exactly it is. But let us attempt to circumscribe value. A value is a qualification (I can find no better word) of its bearer; a *positive value* is a qualification in which the bearer (such as matter, plant, animal and human being) — in its actual existence and ‘action’ — shares if and when it complies with its particular fundamental nature (‘being’ and ‘sense’), with its particular destination (task, purpose, function) as well as with its particular laws (i.e. those that apply to it). A *non- (or negative) value* is a qualification in which the bearer shares when it does not comply with these requirements, or when it violates them. (‘Non-value’ is more than the mere absence or negation of ‘positive value’; it is the concretely existing (and in a sense the ‘positive’) direct opposite of ‘positive value’.) But, what is this axial or value-‘qualification’ that we referred to above? We can only explain this with the aid of analogies. Positive value can be described as ‘splendour’, in which the bearer may share once it complies with its nature, destination and law. The value then glistens and shines, as it were, with its own brilliance. Viewed te-al-ly, it is a creaturely reflection of the glory, kindness, wisdom and

majesty of God Who has determined the ‘essence’ (the fundamental nature), the destination and the law for all creatures. Value attests to the fact (and this is a tautology) that its bearer is quite suitable, well ordered, well determined, well formed, well destined and well done, etc.. The qualification non-value (of what is ‘bad’) can analogously be described (as the opposite image of a positive value) as (an actual, extant and in this sense also, positive) tarnishing (a ‘de-glistening’, a stupor, dirt, contamination, pollution, a stain, etc.¹⁷¹).

e. Values (both positive and negative) are not principles¹⁷², but rather ‘endings’, in other words, resulting qualifications of whether a bearer has met with the requirements of its own fundamental nature, its destination and law, or not. Values as such can therefore not serve as criteria or measures for human actions. Compliance with the fundamental nature (among which principles), destination and law are the true criteria for that. Norms or ‘complying with the law’ should therefore never be mistaken for values / identified with values. Aims / goals / purposes might be valuable (on condition that they comply with the relevant fundamental nature, destination and law), but as such are not values. Values can indeed be actualised (or realised) but cannot directly be striven for; they can only be actualised and realised indirectly through compliance with the fundamental nature, destination and law, for example by doing what ought to be done, and by doing it the way it should be done. Think for example of the actualisation of the value of health or (through loving care of the person) of the value of moral happiness.

f. Through the ages, human beings have always been aware of good and bad, and via them, of values. The intense value consciousness, indeed value cult, of mankind in the present day is, however, amazing. One hears people everywhere speaking of values, from pulpits, political platforms, from national leaders, in editorial articles, in belles-lettres and so on. Among others, they refer to religious values, moral values, cultural values, national values, human values, life-values, and so on. Values are presented — and this is exactly what they are not — as independent (even absolutised) entities, as goods, as ideals that can be striven for, as norms for human actions, as the true meaning-givers in human life, as the panacea for all that has gone awry, and so forth. It is amazing to see what many value-prophets assume to know - and mean - with their proclamations

¹⁷¹ Values attract, whereas non-values repel. They exist, however, independent of whether somebody is attracted by a value or repelled by a non-value. Subjectivistic or rather psychological theories positing that values exist only because of feelings of being attracted or of being repelled, are not acceptable in our view.

¹⁷² See footnote 169.

about values; if one should ask them to explain what exactly they mean by value, the vagueness and imprecision of their conceptualisation become evident. In contrast to a brief four to five decades ago when one was expected to arrange one's life according to fixed principles, the modern value-monger exhorts one to arrange your life according to values. This tendency can probably be ascribed to the dynamic attitude of the modern human being, his or her realisation that (and how) everything changes (at ever faster rates), a mistrust of the traditional and of the common rational sense, and a new trust in the progressive, and also a loss of faith in the fixed (including fixed principles) as well as absorption of the 'irrational'. It seems as if only values could give meaning and direction to a changeable and everchanging life.¹⁷³

g. A comparison between values reveals a splendid (albeit complex) order, among others a (multilinear) hierarchy of values¹⁷⁴ — of both positive and non-values. And it then becomes obvious that values as such are also subject to their own — in other words, axial — law-order.

h. Not only in the cosmic dimension of modalities, of events, and of (individual and social) idiostantic structures, do we encounter principles that (with respect to each cosmic dimension, each in its own way) portrays the radical diversity as well as the coherence therein, but also in the cosmic dimension of values. The principle of *its own acquirement / qualification* ('splendour' or 'non-splendour') as *evidence of compliance or not by the relevant bearer with its fundamental nature* ('essential being' and 'meaning'), *destination and law* applies to the radical diversity of values. For its coherence, the principle of *the universal connectedness* ('unison') of *qualifications / acquirements* ('splendour' and 'non-splendour') as *coherent evidence of compliance or not of the universally connected bearers with their fundamental nature, destination and law-order* applies.

i. The cosmic dimension of values brings with it some other issues to be considered, but we have to conclude with only one of them that is closely related to the question about the cosmos as cosmos, namely the distinction between two orders, viz. *the order of creation and the order of fall into sin (evil) and redemption (recreation)*.

¹⁷³ See my *Die vraag van die bedreiging van die natuurwetenskaplike (veral natuurkundige) wetenskapsidee in historiese perspektief* in *Tydskrif vir Wetenskap en Kuns* (new series; XVIII, 2) and *B. en M.*

¹⁷⁴ See footnote 169.

It is the cosmic dimension of values according to which we learn to distinguish between good and evil, and also between the two orders, viewed in the light of God's Word revelation. Bear in mind, however, that it is an idiostance that is axially (value) determined, in other words, it is an idiostance that acts properly or improperly. We should therefore distinguish between the non-value of sin and the human being who is the sinner and acts sinfully (including his or her sin), and between the non-value of evil and the idiostance that is evil (or bad) or acts evilly (or badly), and also between the value of goodness and the idiostance that is good and acts properly. This raises several important problems, but we cannot deal with them here. [\[Back to Contents\]](#)

9. *The coherence of cosmic dimensions*

- a. By means of the distinctiveness and the coherence of hapantic qualifications, the idiostances (matter, plant, animal and humankind), and of the cosmic dimensions (of modalities, events, of individual and social / societal idiostantic structures, and of values), we have now done an internal-cosmic survey of the radical diversity of the cosmos and its coherence.
 - i. The coherence or mutual connectedness of cosmic dimensions can be observed, in the first place, in the fact that they are universal sides of the cosmos and thereby also of the idiostances matter, plant, animal and human being. We should never lose sight of this in our philosophical inquiries.
 - ii. Secondly, we have to inquire about order — and *in casu* about the hierarchy — of the cosmic dimensions. It is clear that the cosmic dimension of values presupposes the other three, in other words, it is grounded in them. The cosmic dimension of (individual and social) idiostantic structures is grounded in the cosmic dimensions of modalities and events. I am still reflecting on the question whether (as I previously thought¹⁷⁵) the cosmic dimension of events is grounded in that of modalities. I now tend to think that the modal and dynamic sides of idiostances seem to ground the other cosmic dimensions equipollently.
 - iii. In the third place — and this complicates the coherence perspective — the four cosmic dimensions are radically distinctive, and therefore irreducible to one another; they remain universal sides of the entire cosmos and therefore also of the concrete idiostances matter, plant, animal and human being. In analogy of a four-dimensional

¹⁷⁵ See among others my *B. en M.*

space, each cosmic dimension (radically distinct from all the others) stands, as it were, perpendicularly on each of the other three. Each cosmic dimension allows one to see the entire cosmos (in other words, universally) from a particular side. How is the simultaneous and joint existence of these four (mutually radically distinctive) sides of the cosmos (idiostances) possible? Our creaturely knowing (among others, thinking) is unable to grasp this possibility. We can distinguish between the cosmic dimensions, and we can roughly say how they cohere (this is a reference to the following point of discussion), but exactly how it is possible for that which is radically distinctive to cohere, is a hyperdox that reveals the wonderful structure¹⁷⁶ of the cosmos¹⁷⁷. But, notwithstanding this, and mainly because of this, it can be seen as a duty to penetrate the wonderful structure of the cosmos, and in doing so, reveal the majesty of its Creator.

iv. In the fourth place, each cosmic dimension contains (cosmic-dimensionally qualified) references to all the other cosmic dimensions. Or, put differently, if one approached the cosmos universally from the vantage point of one side (or cosmic dimension), then — from the perspective of that particular side or dimension — the other dimensions would come into the picture as well. The ethical (caring for the person,¹⁷⁸ love or non-love, with the ethical love-norm) is a *modal* condition (an attribute, a mode of being) related to ethical / moral deeds / actions (*events*) of people (*idiostant-structural*) and qualified as either good or bad (*value*); the other dimensions are approached here from the vantage point of the modal ethics or morality. Education is an *event*, but can be *modally* distinguished as religious, moral / ethical, lingual, or intellectual education, etc.; *idiostant-structurally*, education is distinguished as education of children, of adults, of a people, etc.; it is distinguished in terms of *value assessment* as good or bad education. The other dimensions are approached here from the perspective of the event (or action) of education. A family as an *idiostantic structure* can be *modally* and / or *dynamically* and / or *axially* analysed; this enables us to determine respectively the place and function of the moral / ethical as well as of the role and destination of education in a family; a family and its functioning can be evaluated as either good or bad (axially); the other cosmic dimensions are approached here from the idiostantic family structure. More

¹⁷⁶ See with respect to wonder and law my *B. en M. and Koers* XXIII, 2.

¹⁷⁷ I can, for instance, distinguish between a bad tooth and toothache and examine the connection between them. But how it is possible that the biotic(al) (*in casu* physiological) can causally determine the psychic(al), since both are radically different and irreducible from each other, transcends human understanding. This is only one of a plethora of examples with respect to the wonderful structure of the cosmos.

¹⁷⁸ See footnote 112.

accurate *value* qualifications refer to *modal*, *dynamic* (or event) and *idiostant-structural* distinctions as their bearers. Though all of this applies, modality, event, idiostantic structure and value remain radically distinctive (and irreducible to one another). This remarkable coherence of that which is radically distinctive cannot be summarised in or forced into a simple logical scheme. We find ourselves arrested here¹⁷⁹ by the wonderful structure of the cosmos. We are able to show that the cosmic dimensions are radically distinctive, that they cohere, and we are also able to discover and learn to know the coherences within boundaries, but how it is possible for that which is radically distinctive to cohere remains a hyperdoxal problem; it transcends the creaturely, in-self-sufficient and law-subjected human mind / brain. It is, therefore, one of the tasks of Philosophy¹⁸⁰ to examine the cosmos (within the confines of its creaturely boundaries) in its radical diversity and coherence, in the process not only revealing the wonderful structure of the cosmos with all its references to its Origin, to the glory, kindness, wisdom and omnipotence of God — from Whom, through and to Whom all ‘things’ are — but also to accept and to respect it. [\[Back to Contents\]](#)

10. *Nature, Culture, worship (and religion)*¹⁸¹

a.i. We once again begin with the idiosyncrasies matter, plant, animal and humankind, and briefly revise what the cosmic dimensions reveal about them. The initial distinction between matter, plant, animal and human being revealed the special nature of the human being; that humankind has a special place and a special role to fulfil. This finding is underscored when we return to the first problem (the cosmos as cosmos, in other words as creation of God) and take cognisance of the distinctiveness and the relationship between God and the human being (to which we will return). The cosmic-dimensional examination of matter, plant, animal and human being has furthermore revealed the uniqueness and unity of humankind. Human beings can know and serve God; human beings can form culture. Matter, plant and animal are, as creatures, te-al-ly

¹⁷⁹ See footnote 177.

¹⁸⁰ Also, other disciplines / sciences have the duty to examine their fields of inquiry up to the level of their wonderful structures, up to the limits of the possibilities of human knowledge. They may, however, not transcend those limits and / or theoretically relativise the wonderful structure of the cosmos or rather level it out because of a suspected though mistaken autonomy of human reason. (See footnote 62.) Reason (in human knowing) possesses its own particular irreducible nature and norms, but possesses in relation with God and with truth no independence, and may therefore not be absolutised (see my *Redelikheid en rasionalisme*, De Bussy, Pretoria, 1933 and my *B. en M.*)

¹⁸¹ See my *B. en M.*

determined (created, maintained and governed by God, and they are subject to his law-order), but they cannot know and serve God, and are unable to form culture — they can themselves only be transformed into ‘cultural things’ by human beings. The human being is accountable, responsible and destined to be free, and in these respects find him- or herself subject to norms (injunctions, cultural norms) which they can either obey or disobey. Matter, plant and animal, on the other hand, are not accountable, responsible and destined to be free¹⁸² and are subject to natural laws that they cannot transgress. This gives us the right to regard matter, plant and animal all together as *nature*¹⁸³. Insofar as the human being analogically participates in that which matter, plant and animal share, the human being also has a natural side, the human being is ‘natur-al’.

ii. The different cosmic dimensions provide us with a closer look at ‘*nature*’. With respect to the cosmic dimension of modalities, nature embraces the first five modalities (the arithmetic, spatial, ‘physical’, biotic(al) and the psychic(al)). With respect to the cosmic dimension of events, nature embraces all the events (causes, activities, processes, stipulated purposes, development) that we may observe in matter, plant, animal as well as — analogically — in human beings. Idiostant-structurally, nature embraces the idiostantic structures of matter, plant and animal form part of nature and — as far as the human being is concerned — of analogous idiostantic structures (enkaptically bound together in the unity of the human being). With respect to the cosmic dimension of values, the value qualifications of matter, plant and animal form part of nature, as well as — analogically — the value qualifications of the human being to the extent that he or she resembles matter, plant and animal.

iii. Apart from religion and church — to be discussed later — the human being forms culture^{183a}, firstly, everywhere where he or she controls / cultivates / governs nature (coins out of mineral ore; chairs out of wood; farms out of land; domestic animals out of wild animals; language and music out of sounds; paintings with paint, and so on). Human beings also create culture in relationships with other people (both as individuals and in social / societal relationships) - when formulating law, in ethical deeds, by consummating a marriage, by creating a family, a state, an association et cetera.

¹⁸² Specifically, human freedom. This has to be distinguished from ‘freedom’ in general — as given in the principles of ‘freedom in its own competence’ and ‘universal dependence of its own competence’ (previously discussed). See with respect to human freedom *O. en R.*, vol. I.

¹⁸³ See my *B. en M.*

^{183a} See the relevant articles in *O. en R., Volume I.*

iv. We regard religion (and the establishment of the church) as separate and distinguishable from culture. When forming culture, the human being finds him- or herself — if I may put it this way — in a ‘horizontal’ — co-creaturely — relationship with matter, plant, animal and human being; but with respect to religion, the human being finds him- or herself in a ‘vertical’ relationship with the God that he or she worships, praises, serves and so on. In forming culture, the human being addresses the in-self-sufficient, creaturely, divine law-subjected beings or creatures; but in the case of religion he or she addresses God (the Absolute, the Self-sufficient, the Archê of all ‘things’). In forming culture, the human being masterly guides nature in the process of caring for him- or herself and other people; he or she serves God with total abandon in an absolute and unconditional sense. The human being who totally and absolutely yields to matter, plant, animal and the human being, creates idols of these creatures of God. For this and other reasons, it has always disturbed me when somebody regards religion as part of culture. However, it is clear that we have to distinguish between religion in the form of liturgical or cultic worship and religion in a wider sense. More about this later (see section III.C.12.c.).

b.i. Religion is not culture, although it makes use of (and presupposes) culture. Culture makes use of (and presupposes) nature. We have, in other words, now discovered a *foundational hierarchy* in terms of which religion is grounded in culture, and culture in nature. Nature (dependent on the culture-forming human being for actualising its potential) receives deepening and new guidance from culture, and culture receives such deepening and new guidance from religion (which places everything in the service of God). This is (in inverse sense) a *deepening or leading hierarchy*.

ii. We should distinguish between *primitive* or ‘*un-civilised*’, *civilised* and *hyper-civilised cultures*¹⁸⁴. Uncivilised cultures are characterised by a minimum of unfolding of human self- and nature-mastery; in hyper-civilised cultures, human beings tend to use their technique of mastery for the sake of their own addiction to, for instance, greed, egoism, power, lust, honour, sex, sport, art, politics, science, technique and so on. Somewhere between these two extremes we find civilisation (civilised culture). *Conversion* is no cultural matter since it is directly related to religion. Civilisation is external in the sense that it is acquired by means of unfolding self- and nature-governance; conversion, on the other hand, is always internal and pertains to the inversion of the deepest existence of a

¹⁸⁴ See my *B. en M.*

human being, of his or her heart, which is the wellspring of life. Like religion is grounded in culture, so conversion is grounded in civilisation, and like religion provides deepening and guidance to culture, so conversion provides deepening and guidance to civilisation.

c. As intimated, religion is service to God in every thing that a human being does, and in that sense includes worship as well as masterly guidance of nature and the forming of culture. [\[Back to Contents\]](#)

11. Nomology and Deontology

In our discussion of the hapantic qualifications, we began with idions, and ended with the law-order. We repeatedly referred to the law-order for and of the cosmos in our investigations into the cosmos as cosmos (as totality in primary sense) as well as in our examination of the coherence of the radical diversity (totality in secondary sense) in / of the cosmos. The theory of the law-order is known as Nomology. It can be developed as a separate philosophical discipline. In their task and in their subjectedness to the normative law-order, human beings find themselves faced with duties, among which the overarching duty of fulfilling a calling. This theory regarding duty is known as Deontology. This also deserves to be developed as a separate philosophical discipline¹⁸⁵.

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12. The cosmos as totality and idiostances as totalities

a. The cosmos as totality

i. We began our discussion with the fundamental question of Philosophy, namely the issue of the cosmos as cosmos — and in the process, the cosmos as totality, as well as in all its ‘parts’ and ‘joints’ — and supplied the answer (according to the Word revelation of God) that it is a creation of God. Three points are relevant here: a. the cosmos finds its origin (as total cosmos) in God; God is Creator, Legislator, Maintainer, Ruler, Guide and Omega of the entire cosmos; b. in its in-self-sufficiency, creatureliness and law-subjectedness, the cosmos points beyond itself to God; c. the epicentre or absolute nodal point / unison of the cosmos is trans-cosmic (external to itself); the cosmos is

¹⁸⁵ My *Outlines of a Deontology of Scientific Method* (in this volume II of O EN R) offers a — special case — illustration.

therefore centred — radically, theocentrically — in the Triune God. We called the cosmos as creation *the cosmic totality in a primary sense*¹⁸⁶.

We next focused on the radical diversity of the cosmos — on hapantic qualifications, idiostances, cosmic dimensions, as well as nature, culture and worship (and religion) — and in each instance also on the relevant coherences¹⁸⁷. In the process, we learnt how many-sided and diverse, how grand, rich and complex the cosmos is as a universal coherence of radical diversity. We called the cosmos as universal coherence of radical diversity *the cosmic totality in a secondary sense*. Whereas the cosmic totality in a primary sense provides us with an external-cosmic view of the cosmos, the cosmic totality in a secondary sense provides us with an internal-cosmic view of the cosmos. The latter has to be ‘seen’ in the light of the former.

In our examination of the totality of the cosmos in a secondary sense, we did not lose sight of the totality of the cosmos in a primary sense; and in view of this perspective, we refrained from seeing anything in the cosmos as independent from God and from absolutising anything. We are now confronted, however, with the issue of the relation between the cosmic totality in a primary and a secondary sense.

We cannot arrive at the external-cosmic vision of the totality of the cosmos as a creation of God from the vantage point of a purely internal-cosmic vision of the cosmos as a universal coherence of radical diversity. All efforts to arrive at the totality of the cosmos in a primary sense (in other words, the cosmos as cosmos) starting from the totality of the cosmos in a secondary sense, are obliged to radically ‘emancipate’ and absolutise the cosmos itself or something in the cosmos¹⁸⁸.

The cosmos as totality in a primary sense is more than the universal coherence of the radical diversity in and of the cosmos (even more than the universal coherence of cosmic dimensions). The whole is also more than ‘the sum of its parts’ and also more than the ‘mutual coherence of its parts’. As a whole (or totality in a primary sense) the cosmos embraces all of its radical diversity and the coherence thereof, and expresses itself in diverse ways in all its radical diversity and coherence.

¹⁸⁶ See section III.B. of this study.

¹⁸⁷ See section III.C.1 up to III.C.11.

¹⁸⁸ Because of this, it has to lapse into ‘-isms’. Only a radically theocentric Philosophy can avoid these ‘-isms’.

All of the above implies — as we pre-supposed — that the cosmos as coherence of radical diversity *ex origine*, in other words, right from the beginning, has to be viewed in the light of the totality of the cosmos in a primary sense, in other words, as a creation of God. Obviously, this brings us to the limits of human knowledge (and *in casu* to that of philosophical inquiry). Accepting the cosmos as a creation of God is only possible on the grounds of a religious faith action aimed at and bounded in by the Word revelation of God. But, as a faith supposition it also provides us with a positive guideline for our examination of the cosmos in its radical diversity as well as the coherence thereof, and helps the philosopher avoid the pitfalls of a purely internal-cosmic approach to the field of philosophical investigation, in other words, the pitfalls of attempting to understand the cosmos entirely from out of itself or out of something in / of the cosmos. The cosmos, as creation of God, possesses its own fundamental nature (and therefore enjoys existence and self-standing-ness); it has no independence in itself. It depends on God for everything. The cosmos does not exist out of, through and to itself; because all things — including the entire cosmos — are out of, through and to God. The cosmos finds its origin and therefore also its totality in a primary (and also in a secondary) sense not in itself, but in God.

In saying this, we posited another limit to philosophical inquiry. We may, as far as possible, trace and examine the radical diversity of the cosmos as well as the coherence thereof, but what it essentially means to say is that the cosmos was created, that the examination of its creatureliness as creatureliness will always remain a mystery that transcends the human mind. We can only stand in wonder; scientifically we cannot fathom the mystery of the cosmos being a creation of God. One has to be God himself to be able to fathom this mystery.

ii. In what we have just said, we once again implicitly encounter the issue of the ‘being’ (own nature, own existence, self-stance) of the cosmos, an issue that we already discussed in the context of the distinction between being and meaning, but here will attend to it from a different perspective, namely according to an exposition of K.J. Popma¹⁸⁹. Is the cosmos a ‘being’ that is different (also in-self-sufficient, creaturely and law-subjected) from God? I hesitate to use the term ‘being’ because of its ambiguity; it has so many (speculative) overburdened meanings and is so abstract. However, in the present discussion (where we refer to God as Being and to the cosmos as meaning) we

¹⁸⁹ See footnote 108.

can hardly avoid using it. The cosmos refers in its totality and in its radical diversity to God. Let us follow Popma in using the term ‘meaning’ for this reference. If the cosmos had no being that has meaning but is meaning in itself, then that would imply that the cosmos existed out of and in its own reference. But reference (meaning) is a relation that presupposes something that refers to something else. If one of these ‘somethings’ were removed, then the relationship (the reference) would also disappear. In our opinion, the cosmos is something that refers to God. On the other hand, if the cosmos were understood to be entirely reference (in other words, pure meaning / sense), it would mean that it is completely dissolved in reference, and then the something that is cosmos would become pure waiflike relation. If one does not wish to dissolve the cosmos into reference (meaning or relation only), then one has to see the cosmos as something (that is not meaning, not reference), but rather something that points beyond itself to God, and therefore possesses meaning. What is this ‘something’ that we call cosmos? It is a creation, a created being, a creaturely being that refers beyond itself to God, ‘something’ that indeed exists, that enjoys its own (in-self-sufficient, creaturely and law-subjected) there-ness, that is not independent from God, but that possesses its own self-stance / there-ness (though in everything dependent on God), and that in its own existence, in its there-ness, refers to God in everything that it entails, it is not in itself meaning but possesses meaning. What this created being as such actually is — as already mentioned — goes beyond our human understanding; it is a mystery. We should not speculate about this; all that we can really say, is that the cosmos is a creation, that it exists as a creation, that the created being of the cosmos is dependent on God for everything, and refers to God. It is, therefore, ‘something’ that (does not dissolve into its relation with God, that is, in other words, not pure relation, i.e. meaning, but rather) possesses meaning. In fact — according to God’s Word — its meaning emanates from the createdness of heaven and earth (in other words, the cosmos) by God, i.e. He has created something with its own existence — something that refers to God.

This is no scholasticism; no two-domain doctrine (of nature and grace). We merely maintain the Biblical duality of Creator and creation, of God and cosmos; a duality with a relationship between the two; and indeed a relationship in which God as the Totally All-sufficient ‘Being’ is avowed, and the cosmos as the in-self-sufficient ‘being’ is recognised. This view does not involve us in any scholastic (especially Thomistic)

doctrine of the *analogia entis*¹⁹⁰. The doctrine of *analogia entis* rests on a false problem-formulation. It begins with an abstract conception of being under which is subsumed both God and the cosmos, and then attempts to draw a radical distinction between the Being of God and the being of the cosmos within this general concept. But God and cosmos (and therefore also the Being of God and the being of the cosmos) are so radically different from each other that both cannot be subsumed under a single concept. The abstract and general ‘being’ is a logical unity; the Being of God and the being of the cosmos cannot both fall under such a(n) (all too human, and indeed rationalistic or logicistic) unit. In other words, the concept ‘being’ in the *analogia entis* doctrine is a logical concept that attempts to bring the Being of God and the being of the cosmos under a single denominator, and as such possesses only nominalistic significance. We ought to begin with the fundamental distinctiveness between God and cosmos, and only thereafter should refer to the Being of God and the being of the cosmos. [Misprint in Afrikaans text? –pgwdup]

iii. To return to the problem in question: the philosopher should (due to his or her faith in God’s Word revelation as well as his or her scientific collaboration with the theologian) depart from the conviction that the cosmos as totality in a primary sense is a creation of God, attempt to understand what might be meant by saying this,¹⁹¹ and should then, in the light of this understanding, examine the cosmos from the inside in its universally coherent radical diversity (and with that as totality in a secondary sense) to discover what it is in terms of its own fundamental nature and its creatureliness, in other words its reference to its Origin — put differently, examine the cosmos internally-cosmically in the light of an external-cosmic perspective.

We should, however, not forget that the creation exists of the heaven (with the angels) and the earth (the cosmos), that heaven and earth parted ways but will be reunited in the new dispensation. The totality of God’s creation therefore embraces more than the totality of only the cosmos. We cannot discuss this any further here. But this brings to our attention the issue whether Ouranology (Theory or doctrine of heaven) — including Angelology (Theory or doctrine of angels) forms part of Philosophy or of Theology. Vollenhoven¹⁹² discusses Ouranology (together with Angelology) to some extent in his

¹⁹⁰ See my *Die mens asbeeld van God* in O. en R., vol. I as well as the final part of my *God en Kosmos* in volume II of O EN R.

¹⁹¹ For example with the distinction of creation and emanation.

¹⁹² See footnote 48.

Philosophy. In our opinion, Ouranology (and Angelology) are scientific disciplines in their own right that are neither Theology nor Philosophy. Philosophy has only the cosmos as totality and its coherent radical diversity as its field of inquiry, and Theology the (Word and creation) revelation of God about Himself and his relationship with all things. Since there is so little data available about the heaven and the angels (mostly in the Word of God, which is exegetically examined by Theology), Theology should assume guardianship / responsibility of both Ouranology and Angelology.

b. *Idiostances as totalities*

i. The distinction between primary and secondary totalities also applies to idiostances. An idiostance as totality in primary sense (as creature of God) is more than the coherence of its modal, dynamic, structural and axial qualifications. The primary totality of the cosmos and the primary totality of an idiostance differ, however. The cosmos consists of mutual (connected in many ways) idiostances, but is itself no idiostance. Let me say this as follows: the primary totality of the cosmos is ‘formal’ but that of an idiostance ‘material’. The primary totality of an idiostance is essentially a ‘materially’ intrinsic, integral whole. The cosmos as creation, as primary totality, forms a ‘formal’ unity of mutually connected and intertwined idiostances (creatures); it does not form a super-idiostance.

ii. I am still today struggling with the issues that I struggled with 35-40 years ago^{192a}. Although I now see (and address) these issues differently in many respects, the basic direction of my view regarding these issues (and the relevant answers) has remained the same. Back then, I called matter, plant, animal and human being ‘substances’. Due to the publications of Dooyeweerd, and because of correspondence with him, because I found the term ‘substance’ to have so many meanings and to be theoretically so burdened that my use of it only gave rise to misunderstandings, and also for the sake of cooperation with fellow-Calvinists working on the *Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea*, I decided to abandon the term ‘substance’. I could, however, not accept their terms ‘thing-unit’ (because the human being is no ‘thing’) and ‘sistasis’ (because the substance as a cosmically original whole is no *sistasis*). In the last few years, I replaced my term ‘substance’ with ‘idiostance’. Furthermore, what I today call ‘cosmic dimensions’, I used to call ‘cone sections’; at that time, I also mentioned the possibility of six such ‘cone sections’, namely modalities, substances, time, values, causality and purposes / ends,

^{192a} See literature mentioned in footnote 1.

and examined modalities and substances more closely. I realise today that there are only four cosmic dimensions, namely modalities, events (including time, purpose / end, causality), individual and social idiostantic structures, and values, and that substance (idiostance) is not a ‘cone section’ (cosmic dimension) of the cosmos, but rather a complete, original whole that embraces its own cosmic dimensions and expresses itself in each cosmic dimension in a particular manner, in other words, that an idiostance is more than the sum of its cosmic dimensions and their inter-dimensional coherence. And also, at that time, I one-sidedly approached substance only from the cosmic dimension of events by departing from Leibniz’s conception of substance as *un être capable d’action* (a being that acts), despite the fact that I replaced his ‘monade’ with matter, plant, animal and human being¹⁹³.

Dooyeweerd¹⁹⁴ replied comprehensively and penetratingly to all my various objections to the relevant views expressed in the *Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea*, at the same time keenly, intensively and sympathetically criticising my views. The point of discussion was especially (*in casu*) my concept(ion) of ‘substance’ at the time¹⁹⁵. I am truly grateful to him for this. I learnt much from this experience. It forced me to intensively-critically examine once again my own views. It also helped me to better understand Dooyeweerd’s philosophy. Concerning the issues discussed here, my main objections against the *Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea* were, *inter alia*, that this Philosophy did not do justice to the ‘substantial’ (nowadays ‘idiostantic’) character, and with it, the being or reality character, of the cosmos. In his response, Dooyeweerd subjected my substance concept(ion) to comprehensive and keen criticism. But he has fundamentally misunderstood my concept of substance. I must bear some of the blame for this. Because what I meant by ‘substance’ I did not myself see clearly or explain lucidly; I did not expound my views in detail and did not protect myself against possible misunderstandings; at that time, I saw substance as a ‘cone section’ and one-sidedly connected it with the dynamic (that which is revealed by the cosmic dimension of

¹⁹³ In my *Wysbegeerte van die Skeppingsidee* (1933:p. 12) I intended the unfolding of power, love and will as illustrations of the cosmic dynamic reality character. I did not formulate this clearly and precisely enough, however, which explains why Dooyeweerd misunderstood my intention. See also p. 36-37.

¹⁹⁴ Cf. several places in the Dutch and English versions of his main work (referred to in footnote 113).

¹⁹⁵ See the literature mentioned in footnote 1, among others especially my *Wysbegeerte van die Skeppingsidee*. For Dooyeweerd’s criticism of it, see the English version of his main work (mentioned in footnote 113; Vol. III, p. 61-76).

events). On the other hand, Dooyeweerd's misunderstanding could be blamed on the fact that in some cases he read into my words meanings that I had not intended in the first place¹⁹⁶. However, since some of my own views have changed in the meantime, it would not be feasible for me to respond point for point to his comprehensive and penetrating criticism; by means of a number of statements, I shall only mention what I did not mean by substance (and nowadays do not mean by idiostance)¹⁹⁷ and then enter into more detail about the main point of difference in our views.

I did not construe a metaphysical concept, did not search for metaphysical being with my substance concept; in other words, I did not lapse into speculation; I did not search for any hidden being, hidden power, substantial core, ontic unit behind, above or outside of creative reality. I only attempted to examine and describe matter, plant, animal and the human being as they reveal themselves to us. I did not understand substance as autonomous, *self-contained, being in itself*; as an independent bearer of attributes or as something that has its origin in itself; I did not attribute to the cosmos any autonomous being and value in its relationship with God, and with my substance concept, I did not transcend the creative reality (*the meaning-horizon*) by absolutising analogies such as power, love and will¹⁹⁸. The substances, or better: idiostances (matter, plant, animal, human being), are totally in-self-sufficient, creaturely, subject to the law-order of God, dependent on God for everything. I learnt much (with careful distinction) from Von Scheler, but I fail to see in my substance concept in those times any Schelerian after-effects, and also any irrationalistic features. I do realise today, however, that with idiostances, we find ourselves confronted with hyperdoxal boundary issues that transcend our human minds. I also did not venture, with my substance concept (along with my concept of being), into neo-scholastic waters (as propounded by the doctrine of *analogia entis* or the doctrine of the two domains — namely of supra-nature / grace and of nature). All these negations also apply to my current idiostance concept. This will become clear from the following.

¹⁹⁶ An example of this is that he understood my words “the own being of the cosmos” as *autonomous being*, whereas I only intended it to refer to own existence (self-standingness) and not to independence or autonomy.

¹⁹⁷ Dooyeweerd acknowledges with regard to several of the following that I indeed deny them.

¹⁹⁸ See footnote 193.

iii. What exactly are the idiostances, in other words, matter, a plant, an animal and a human being? In Dooyeweerd's words¹⁹⁹: "*Stoker wishes to take a closer view of the things²⁰⁰ of naïve experience. With this desire I am in full agreement*" (p. 74).

However — and this is the crux of the matter — we ought to begin (after examining the ground-idea of Philosophy and the hapantic qualifications of the cosmos) with an examination of the idiostances. An idiostance is *in the first place* an in-self-sufficient creature subject to God's law-order for the cosmos. It finds its origin in God, not in itself, and refers in its in-self-sufficient creaturely and law-subjected nature to God. It is not independent and self-contained, but dependent on God for everything (including his maintenance, governance, guidance, leading to a final destination as well as redemption and recreation). It is not autonomous and is therefore not independent of God. *In the second place*, an idiostance possesses its own fundamental nature (received from God and radically distinctive from God, totally creaturely), an in-self-sufficient self-stance (its own there-ness, own 'being'). It really *is* (exists), it is a creaturely being²⁰¹. This statement is no speculation, only a description of the existence ('stance') of the idiostance, namely that it *is*, 'be-ing', an actual or real being. Its 'be-ing' / being is a creaturely being, radically different and quite incomparable with the 'Being' of God²⁰². *In the third place*, an idiostance reveals itself (not as an isolated but rather) as a complete²⁰³ whole. It is not an isolated whole because there are many relationships, mutual qualifications, and so on, among the idiostances, in other words, many ways of

¹⁹⁹ Page numbers given in parentheses refer to the English translation of Dooyeweerd's main work, Vol. III; see footnote 113.

²⁰⁰ Under 'things of the naive experience' Dooyeweerd places matter, plant and animal. The human being is no thing (because his or her heart transcends both cosmic diversity and cosmic time). Under idiostance I place matter, plant, animal as well as human being. This has to be kept in mind in the following discussion. Dooyeweerd's view does not deny that the human being, notwithstanding the selfness (heart), also shares in the 'dimensions of the human experience horizon'.

²⁰¹ I normally avoid using the abstract and theoretically overburdened concept 'being', but I can hardly do so here because Dooyeweerd distinguishes the Being of God from the cosmos as meaning. In my view, the Being of God is absolute and All-selfsufficient whereas that of the cosmos (and therefore also of the idiostances) is creaturely, in-self-sufficient, dependent in everything on God, and a referent to God, its Origin, in everything.

²⁰² God *is*; God really exists. The cosmos *is*; the cosmos exists. With reference to both, I speak of 'being' although they are radically different and also despite the fact that they can not both be logically subsumed or thought of in one concept of 'being'. A logical concept that would be able to embrace the 'being' of both in one logical unity would only have nominalistic significance.

²⁰³ Idiostances stand in a wide array of relationships with each other; they influence one another in a legion of ways. The one is never isolated from all the others, and also not from God. But each has its own unity, forms a complete whole.

cohering with and depending on one another. An idiostance is a complete whole, as can be observed in the fact that its appertaining idions²⁰⁴ presuppose its (i.e. the idiostance's) existence, whereas the idiostance itself is no appertaining idion. Also this shows that the idiostance is (not an autonomous or independent, but rather) an own-standing whole / entirety; an appertaining idion has no such own-stance; it is no complete self-standing / whole. *In the fourth place*, the idiostances matter, plant, animal and human being are radically distinctive from each other. This is explicitly revealed when we examine the appertaining idions of each in their 'appertaining-ness'. *In the fifth place*, the appertaining idions appear to be categorised into the four cosmic dimensions (of modalities, events, individual and social idiostantic structures, and values). These cosmic dimensions are universal sides in which each idiostance shares (in its own particular manner); each idiostance expresses itself in its own unique way in the respective cosmic dimensions. This shows, *in the sixth place*, that an idiostance embraces its cosmic dimensions (and therefore also all of its appertaining idions) as well as their universal coherences, in other words, that an idiostance is more than the sum of its cosmic dimensions (all the appertaining idions) and their coherences. *In the seventh place*, each cosmic dimensional range (including all the appertaining idions) is 'actual' or real due to the reality or actual existence of the reality of the idiostance to which it belongs. *In the eighth place*, all of the above implies that in our examination of the cosmic dimensional stipulated-ness of an idiostance, we should refrain from favouring any of the cosmic dimensions; the idiostance expresses its reality character in each of the cosmic dimensions in a unique manner. *Finally*, it follows from the preceding that our examination has to commence with idiostances, and that in the light of that, we should proceed to an examination of their cosmic dimensional qualifications (including their particular appertaining idions). The *inverse* would be erroneous. By beginning with the cosmic dimensions (or rather the appertaining idions) one would not be able to get a grasp of idiostances as complete own-standing wholes. By following the inverse method, one would *nolens volens* lapse into the methodological error of a *pars pro toto*.

iv. Dooyeweerd²⁰⁵ denies in his criticism of my views that the individual thing²⁰⁶ is a 'substance' (currently better: 'idiostance'), a creaturely 'being' with 'meaning'; in his

²⁰⁴ Some of the appertaining idions may be characteristics / features of idiostances; not all of them are by any means, however, characteristics / features of an idiostance. It would therefore be erroneous to see an idiostance as the bearer of its characteristics / features.

²⁰⁵ See footnote 199.

²⁰⁶ See footnote 200.

opinion, it *is* ‘meaning’²⁰⁷. He also accepts pre-scientifically (‘in our naive experience’) that we have an intuitive knowledge of a thing as a whole. He then approaches this ‘thing’ from the ‘three dimensions of the horizon of human experience’²⁰⁸ of time, modality and individuality structure. i. He commences with the modal analysis of a thing (the modal law-sphere theory) “and ... proceeded from this theory to that of the typical structure of individuality” (p. 62). But there seems to be a tension between the irreducible distinction of modal law spheres and individual law spheres (a distinction that is no arbitrary construction but is grounded in the cosmic order), an ostensible contradiction that can be ascribed to the *Gegenstand* theory (p. 63). The theory of law spheres is inadequate for explaining the unity structure of an individual thing (as guaranteed by God’s creation plan). Despite this, the dimensions are compatible; there exists between them an unbreachable and intrinsic coherence. The structural unity of a thing presupposes the modal functions but is itself not modal. “The transcendental idea of an individual whole precedes the theoretical analysis of its modal functions” and leaves the sphere-sovereignty of the modal functions intact. ii. “...To take a closer view of things of naïve experience ... is the task of theory of structures of individuality, which cannot be replaced by a theory of substance in the lines of Stoker’s provisional hints” (p. 74). The individual thing of our ‘naive experience’ acquires its identity from its internal, structural principle (p. 65). iii. In order to guarantee the reality of the individual thing, Dooyeweerd reverts to cosmic time²⁰⁹. Each modal function of an individual whole and of the irreducible modalities is grounded in a temporal order, and has a bottom layer in the continuous inter-modal coherence of cosmic time. “The temporal horizon lurks behind and in the modal horizon of reality” (p. 63-64). Also the unbroken coherence of the typical structure of the individual whole is guaranteed by cosmic time. The temporal order is the basis of the flexible horizon (in other words, of the individuality structures (p. 63-64)). The non-modal unity and identity of things have their grounds in cosmic time (pp. 65 and 67). The temporal reality is imbedded in cosmic time (p. 63). Reality has its inter-modal depth layer in the continuity of cosmic time. Reality in its typical thing-structure is present in the continuous coherence of time (p. 64-65). The individual whole

²⁰⁷ ‘De *zin* is het *zijn* van alle *creatuurlijke zijnde*, de *zijnswijze* ook van onzen zelfheid ... Dit universele *heen-wijzende* en *uitdrukkende* karakter van heel onzen geschapen kosmos stempelt de creatuurlijke werkelijkheid naar hare afhankelijke onzelfgenoegzame *zijnswijze* als *zin*.’ (See his main work — mentioned in footnote 113 — volume I, p. 6.)

²⁰⁸ See footnote 143c.

²⁰⁹ See footnote 155b.

of a thing is realised only in the depth layer of cosmic time of each individuality structure (p. 65).

All of the above makes it clear that Dooyeweerd has been following the method to which I referred in a previous paragraph as the *inverse method*. From the vantage point of the modality theory, he advances towards understanding of the theory of individuality structures as a new dimension (that does not abrogate the dimension of modalities), in order to understand from the perspective of the individuality structure the unity and totality of a thing (in our terminology: idiostance). And then he goes from there to his doctrine of cosmic time for the purpose of understanding the reality of the thing (our: idiostance). Apart from a few points of difference,²¹⁰ I agree in general with the distinction of his modalities and individuality structures (in other words, idiostantic structures). His conception of cosmic time — I can't help it — creates in me the impression of a metaphysical construction, although Dooyeweerd did not intend it like that. I do not subscribe to the theory that the structural qualification of a thing (our: idiostance) can guarantee its unity and wholeness, and that cosmic time can guarantee its reality. One cannot penetrate to the concrete, real totality — to the creaturely being — of an idiostance via the three cosmic dimensions of Dooyeweerd. This is the *inverse method*. An idiostance reveals itself right from the beginning as a concrete, real, complete totality. That is where we should begin. Thereafter we can attempt to understand how an idiostance expresses itself as such in its four cosmic dimensions and in their mutual coherence — in each cosmic dimension in its unique manner. As concrete, truly complete totality, the idiostance is more than what each of its cosmic dimensions and all four of them together as well as their mutual coherence can offer (in other words, more than the sum of all of this). The idiostance has no need to have its unity or totality / wholeness guaranteed by its 'individuality structure' (our: idiostantic structure) and to have its reality guaranteed by 'cosmic time'. It possesses it, or is it, as an idiostance; and expresses it, in different ways, in the cosmic dimensions and in its appertaining idions and their coherence.

The key question therefore is: do we have to begin (as we think) with a material thing, a plant, an animal and a human being as idiostances, in other words as creaturely, complete, real totalities, and together with all of this, their creaturely, in-self-sufficient

²¹⁰ This includes, among others, Dooyeweerd's epistemological doctrine of *Gegenstand*. Also, Van Riessen has certain objections to it. Despite Dooyeweerd's explanation, there is persistent tension between his doctrine of *Gegenstand* and his theory of individuality structures.

law-subjected ‘being’, and then examine their dimensional qualities in the light of this, or should we (as Dooyeweerd contends) guarantee their wholeness and reality by means of his three dimensions?²¹¹

This problem is related to the issue of ‘being’ and ‘meaning’ (in our opinion, idioscences are not meaning in themselves, but rather *have* meaning, but according to Dooyeweerd the things — the entire created reality — *are* meaning).

This coheres with Dooyeweerd’s Christocentrically grounded anthropocentric view of the cosmos : he first accepts the meaning-totality of our temporary cosmos in Christ — in his human nature — and then, based on this assumption, develops a religiously grounded anthropocentric cosmology.

c. *The religiosity and / or te-al-ity of the cosmic totality and of idiostantic totalities*²¹²

We are focusing here on totality / -ies in primary sense, in other words, in its/their radical distinctiveness from, relationship with and total dependence on God, its / their Origin. May we, in this respect, call the cosmic totality (the cosmos) and the idiostantic totalities (the idiostants) ‘religious’? May we — in the terminology of the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea — call the meaningfulness, the meaning totality as well as the root unity of the cosmos ‘religious’?

Let us imagine three concentric circles that — despite the sketchiness of the scheme — portray the relationship of the cosmos (of matter, plant, animal and human being) with God. i. The outer circle represents the te-al²¹³ relationship. This is a direct relationship in which matter as well as plant, animal and human being are maintained, governed and guided by God. Matter, plant, animal and human being are from, through and to God. ii. The innermost circle represents the human being’s direct religious service to God — religion in restricted sense; worship. The human being, created as God’s image, can directly enter into a relationship with God; he or she can, as members of a church congregation, during family prayers and in an inner room address God, glorify and respect Him, pray to Him and thank Him; he or she knows God’s revelation that He has already given before the advent of Christ and also with the advent of Christ; God has given humankind the aptitude to believe in Him and to know Him; he or she listens to

²¹¹ It seems unnecessary to enter into the other points of Dooyeweerd’s criticism after having explained what I understand under ‘idiostance’.

²¹² See footnotes 39, 40, 58 and 85.

²¹³ See *B. en M.* and footnote 212.

God's Word, preaches it, praises his Name in psalm and song, and partakes in the sacraments; he or she participates in missionary work and evangelises, and so on. All of this is impossible for matter, plant and animal. In this relationship with, directedness at and service of God, the human being is unique, the crown of God's creation. iii. But God has also mandated the human being — a pure creature like matter, plant and animal — and created him or her in such a way that he or she can carry out this mandate. He appointed the human being as *mandator Dei* to, in his or her creaturely-human manner, govern in the Name of God over his creation and to care for it; in doing so, to form culture and (correctly understood) as creaturely (totally dependent on God) co-labourer of God, do his or her duty in responsibility towards God and in fulfilment of his or her destination, not only of him- or herself as human being, but also of the entire cosmos, and to, under the guidance of God realise — obedient to his law — all the potential that God has given in his cosmos. In doing all of this, the human being also serves God. This is a wider service of God, and we refer to it — in distinction from religion in the narrower sense, i.e. worship — as religion²¹⁴. Also in this respect, the human being is unique and the crown of God's creation. Matter, plant, animal ~~and the human being~~ [misprint?-translator & pgwdup] do not have, and do not know, any religion. Religion (the intermediary circle) includes religion in the narrower sense (religious worship).

This implies that the cosmos as totality (in primary sense) is not religious but rather te-al. We have to begin with the "te-al-ity" of the cosmos, and only then in the light of that, may and should we consider the religiosity of the human being and his or her relationship with the cosmos. A philosopher who holds a (Christo-centrally grounded) anthropocentric view of the cosmos (such as we find in the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea — *in casu* Dooyeweerd) must fundamentally also assume the meaning totality of the cosmos to be religious.

The above exposition was according to the order of creation, the first arrangement of order. A second arrangement was added with the order of fall into sin (and evil) and of redemption (and recreation) and of the Kingship of Christ²¹⁵ over all that God created.

²¹⁴ See *B. en M.* and footnote 212. The above departed only from the order of creation. The order of fall into sin (and evil) and redemption (and recreation) bring still other perspectives.

²¹⁵ Calvinistic Philosophy should of course do justice to the perspective provided by the Kingship of Christ as background for philosophical inquiry. Also, this truth sheds light on the field of inquiry of Philosophy. But what we do not accept, is that Christ (according to his human nature) should be seen as the Centre of the cosmos. I have not made a profound and thorough study of the significance of the Kingship of Christ for philosophical problematology (although I have repeatedly referred to his redemptive and recreative work).

Firstly, the cosmos according to the second order arrangement should always be seen from the vantage point of the first order. And secondly, the second order does not abrogate the first; the requirement remains that the cosmic totality (of matter, plant, animal and human being) first be viewed in its theocentricity. Only then, in that perspective, may the issues with respect to the particular relationship of Christ (and of the Holy Spirit) with the cosmos (including the human being) be addressed — insofar as they are philosophically relevant.

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d. *A few other issues*

i. *Wonder and law*²¹⁶

We limit our discussion to a few remarks.

God's deeds of creation, maintenance, governance, guidance, direction, redemption, recreation and leading to the final destination are all wonderful deeds. We should also include in this list God's legislation / law-giving (his arrangement and maintenance of all his ordinances for all the 'things'). We have to begin with these wonderful deeds. In view of them, we should subsequently attempt to understand and examine the cosmic law-order. He or she who commences with the law-order itself and then attempts to penetrate from there to God's wonderful deeds, lapses into the antinomy of law and wonder. It is evident also from this perspective that we have to begin with an external-cosmic vision of the cosmos and then only proceed to an internal investigation of the cosmos. He or she who begins with an internal-cosmic vision of the cosmos (*in casu* the law), will not be in a position to discover what exactly the cosmos as cosmos (*in casu* what the law as law) entails, namely that it is a creation of God (*in casu* that the law has its origins in wonder).

ii. *Eternity and time*²¹⁷

The entire cosmos (matter, plant, animal and human being) is subject to time (temporal).

The word *eternity* has three meanings. a. The eternity in the heart of the human being still falls within the unique time of the human being. It began with the creation of the human being. b. The future dispensation after the second coming of Christ has also been referred to as eternity. The entire creation, matter, plant, animal and human being,

²¹⁶ See my *B. en M.* and my article in *Koers* XXIII, 2.

²¹⁷ See my articles in *Tydskrif vir Wetenskap en Kuns* (new series), VIII, 1 and VIII, 2.

will share in this ‘new’ form of time. It commences with the new dispensation. c. God’s eternity is not made of time, it has no beginning and no end; it cannot be compared to time. This is the eternity that we are dealing with here. This eternity is the origin of time. Time first has to be externally-cosmically ‘seen’ and ‘understood’ from the vantage point of this eternity. He or she who begins with created time will not be able to form a (human-creaturely) conception of eternity and will lapse into antinomies.

iii. *The guidance of God*²¹⁸

God governs the entire cosmos but He guides the human being. The issue of the governance / guidance of God especially affects human beings as historical and history-forming beings. We refer to the guidance of God because He created the human being to be accountable and responsible. Here again we find ourselves confronted with a hyperdox. But also here we should ‘view’ and ‘understand’ human actions (including making of history) in the light of God’s governance / guidance, and be open to it. However, he or she who begins in fundamental respect with the deeds of the human being finds him- or herself compelled to place those deeds antithetically in opposition to the guidance of God, and runs the risk of forming an erroneous (human) understanding of the guidance of God, and also of becoming trapped in antinomies.

D. *The fourth question*

1. The *first* question was the philosophical ground-question, the question with respect to the cosmos as cosmos, the cosmic totality in primary sense, and the cosmos as creation of God.

The *second* question pertained to the radical diversity in and of the cosmos, the origins, the primordial, the (irreducible) idions, the primordial idions, particularly the radical diversity of hapantic qualifications, of idiostances, of cosmic dimensions, and within each of the dimensions, and also nature, culture and religion (in both restricted and wider senses).

The *third* question pertained to the universal coherence of the radical diversity in and of the cosmos, of the primordial idions and the given internal-cosmic unity or totality of the cosmos, the cosmic totality in secondary sense.

²¹⁸ See the section on *History* in *B. en M.* and my article on *Freedom* in *O. en R.*, vol. I.

In the context of all three of these questions there were also questions regarding the law-order to which the cosmos as totality and coherent radical diversity is subject.

Questions were also framed with respect to the relationship between the cosmos as totality in primary sense (as creation of God) and its totality in secondary sense as universal coherence of radical diversity, including several questions about the relationship between God and cosmos insofar as they were relevant for philosophical inquiry²¹⁹.

All these questions fall under the philosophical discipline *General Philosophical Cosmology*. After all, the cosmos in its totality and coherent radical diversity — in its creaturely dependence on its Origin, the Archê, God — is Philosophy's field of inquiry, which cannot be taken care of by any other scientific discipline.

2. We now have to attend to the Special Philosophic Disciplines; addressing the *fourth* main question / issue of Philosophy is their speciality, namely the question regarding a particular primordial idion and its place and role in the totality of the cosmos²²⁰. The Special Philosophical Disciplines have to be conducted in view of the results of the General Philosophical Cosmology.

We address the fourth question by making use of one example, namely “what is ‘law’^{220a} and what is its place and role in the totality of the cosmos?” — a question for Philosophy of Law. We frame the questions in accordance with the classification typical of the General Philosophical Cosmology that we referred to above. This is a rather complicated approach; Philosophy of Law has discovered and follows a simpler classification of legal-philosophical problems. It is, however, our intention to state the philosophical problem of ‘law’ to its full extent.

Law is a *cosmic* idion, in other words a *creature*. It is also a *human* idion. It is also a *cultural* idion. This is the perspective background of which we should never lose sight. Closer inspection reveals that law is also a *modal* idion. Once we have discovered what law is as law, we have to ask about its place and role in the totality of the cosmos. The *modal* problems, with which we begin because of law being a modal idion, are those in connection with the place of the law in the hierarchy of modalities, that of the

²¹⁹ About the first question, see section B and for the second and third, section C of this study.

²²⁰ See sections I.a.vi.4. and III.A.1.a.iv.

^{220a} See my ‘n Kursoriese besinning oor menseregte in *Bulletin van die S.A. Vereniging vir die bevordering van Christelike wetenskap* (I, 3).

anticipations of the law-sphere to the modal spheres of the moral / ethical and religion, and that of the retrocipations of the law-sphere to the various lower modal spheres; but also that of the anticipations of the lower modal spheres to the law-sphere, and that of the retrocipation of the modal sphere of religion to the law-sphere; and finally, we have to deal with the issue of the modal law-norm and of the relevant differentiated though coherent modal law-order. ‘How should we distinguish between law and morality, law and economy, law and legal concept, law and legal consciousness, and so on, and how are they related?’ are some of the questions that surface here. Because all cosmic dimensions cohere, we have to examine law as modal idion in its connectedness with the *other cosmic dimensions*. In the case of its connection with the *cosmic dimension of events*, we have to deal with problems such as the actualisation (realisation) of law, the positivisation / concretisation of law, the forming of legal ‘ethos’, the history of law, law and accountability, responsibility and freedom, law and causality, the teleic (teleology), and so forth, and with the coherence of all of this, as well as with the relevant normative law-order. In the case of the connection of law with the *cosmic dimension of individual and social structures*, we have to deal with problems regarding law and the individual, the place and role of law in the three-way structuredness of a social / societal relationship, law in the relationship between individual and social / societal relationship, also between social group and social group, law and enkapsis, law and the authority structure of a particular social relationship, et cetera, and the coherence of all of this, as well as the differentiated but coherent law-order relevant to all of this. With respect to its connection with the *cosmic dimension of values*, we have to deal with issues regarding justice and injustice and the role of juridical values and non-values in the coherence of all the other values, as well as the relevant varied though coherent law-order. We also have to deal with a complex of issues related to law and the *coherence of the cosmic dimensions*. Although we repeatedly assumed that law is a human idion,, we now have to return to the issue of law as human law (in the human being’s total dependence on God) and also examine the law problem in connection with the distinction and coherence of matter, plant, animal and human being. And also in this context, we find the issue of the relevant differentiated though coherent law-order surfacing. An examination of law as law of the human being as idiostantic totality confronts us directly with (inter alia) the problem from which we departed, namely the dependence of the law of the human being

on its Origin, God, and thereby also with the problem of law as a facet of the human being as image of God²²¹. Et cetera.

The question ‘what is law?’, and what its place and role is in the totality of the cosmos, can *mutatis mutandis* also be framed with respect to any other primordial idion, such as number²²², the biotic(al) (or ‘life’), ‘consciousness’ (or the psychic(al)), language, the moral / ethical,²²³ the state, the church (as institute), education, development, history, the value ‘beauty’, and so on. In each of these cases, we are dealing with the *fourth* question, namely: ‘what is this (in other words, a particular) primordial idion, and what is its place and role in the totality of the cosmos?

3. Special Philosophical Disciplines address this question. Each investigation has to be undertaken in terms of the findings of General Philosophical Cosmology, in other words, according to the philosophical ground-idea of the creation-idea. There are two main disciplines and a wide array of particular disciplines within Special Philosophical Disciplines. The two main disciplines within Special Philosophical Disciplines are Philosophical Anthropology and Gnoseology.

Philosophical Anthropology is a main discipline because the human being has been appointed, in his or her uniqueness and unity as created image of God²²⁴, as accountable, responsible, destined to freedom and vocation-fulfilling *mandator Dei*, the crown of God’s creation, and therefore with an extraordinary place and role in the cosmos. This discipline searches for answers to the question: ‘Who (not ‘what’²²⁵) is the human being and what is his or her place in the cosmos?’ This Special Philosophical Discipline can only be practised correctly against the backdrop of the General Philosophical Cosmology. Philosophers who attempt to depart inversely from Philosophical Anthropology towards General Philosophical Cosmology cannot do (full) justice to the General Philosophical Cosmology.

Gnoseology (the Philosophy of knowledge) is another main discipline in Special Philosophical Disciplines. Epistemology (the theory of knowing) and Philosophy of Science (or the Encyclopaedia of the Sciences), on the other hand, are particular

²²¹ See my article on *Die mens asbeeld van God* in O. en R., I.

²²² The Pythagorians had an exquisite view of this.

²²³ See my article on the *Sedelike* in O. en R., vol. I.

²²⁴ See footnote 221.

²²⁵ Because a human being is a person and not a thing. The question: ‘Who is the human being?’ embraces the whole human being.

disciplines in Special Philosophical Disciplines. We have to bear in mind that General Gnoseology, General Epistemology (or Theory of Knowing) and General Philosophy of science are intermediate sciences / disciplines as well²²⁶. In the present context, however, we refer to Gnoseology, Epistemology and Philosophy of Science only as philosophical disciplines. Because human knowledge is a creaturely cosmic idion as well as a human one, Gnoseology also presupposes both the General Philosophical Cosmology and the Philosophical Anthropology as its background. Gnoseology is a main discipline in the Special Philosophical Disciplines because Philosophy (like every other scientific discipline) has, on the one hand, its own field of investigation, i.e. the particular knowable, but, on the other hand, is also (like all other scientific disciplines) science, in other words a form of knowledge.

In our opinion, the following also belong to the particular Special Philosophical Disciplines: i. Philosophy of Nature (including Philosophy of the Lifeless / Material and Philosophy of Living Nature), Philosophy of Culture and Philosophy of Religion; also ii. Epistemology, and Philosophy of Science; as well as iii. Logic, Philosophy of Language, Philosophy of Art, Philosophy of Economics, Philosophy of Law, Moral Philosophy, Social Philosophy, Philosophy of the State, Philosophy of History, Philosophy of Education, Philosophy of Value, and so on.

It stands to reason that the General Philosophical Cosmology and all the Special Philosophical Disciplines cohere, and also that Philosophy, Theology and the special disciplines as well as the (general) inter-disciplines should cooperate (interact, borrow and lend necessary findings and conclusions), and furthermore, that justice should be done to the bond / connection between, not only Philosophy and (pre-scientific) life- and worldview knowledge, but also between all the other particular / special scientific disciplines and life- and worldviews.

IV. TO ROUND OFF

Everything mentioned above falls under *Systematic Philosophy*. This discipline has to be distinguished from the *History of Philosophy* and the *Discipline of Philosophical Movements / Trends / Schools*. With this, the entire field of philosophical inquiry has now been covered.

²²⁶ See footnote 21a.

History of Philosophy can be practised using various methods²²⁷, including the purely chronological method, the chronological genetic method, the method of main trends, the movement or school method, the method of genetic ideas or concepts, the problem-historical method, and the method according to religious ground-motives and their development. Neutral practice of historiography (as well as a neutral treatment of the History of Philosophy) is not possible. This applies also to the following two Calvinistic historiographies.

Vollenhoven²²⁸ applies the problem-historical method. The implementation of this new method is laudable, despite the fact that one does not necessarily agree with everything that Vollenhoven offers. For example, his discussion of philosophical problems (and systems) from his perspective of the threefold being²²⁹, namely God, law and cosmos, does not in all respects provide a correct insight into the system of a particular philosopher²³⁰. Other distinctions made by him (I am thinking here of his distinctions regarding universalism, individualism and partial universalism (requiring in my opinion, augmentation with partial individualism)) are quite simply masterful and brilliant. Notwithstanding criticism from contenders, this is historiography of the highest order.

Dooyeweerd²³¹ approaches the History of Philosophy with his transcendental-critical method in his attempts to reveal the religious ground-motives of ‘philosophical thought’ and its development. This is yet another original historiographical method. One objection to it might be the fact that, in the case of the entire Greek Philosophy, the entire Scholastic Philosophy and the entire modern humanistic Philosophy, he only discovered a *single* religious ground-motive for each (for every philosopher in question, one has to *de novo* detect his or her religious ground-motive and work out how it functions), but with this method of revealing the relevant ground-motives and their development, Dooyeweerd has also made extraordinarily important and quite insightful contributions to historiography^{231a}.

²²⁷ See my review in *Koers XIX*, 1.

²²⁸ See footnote 49.

²²⁹ See footnote 49 and section III.B.2.c.iii. of this study.

²³⁰ In my opinion, Plato’s animal domain was intended in the first place to be ontic and not normative; it acquires normative significance only in its relationship with the transitory reality.

²³¹ Cf. Volume I of his main work as well as his *Reformatie en Scholastiek in de Wijsbegeerte*, Volume I, T. Wever, Franeker, 1949.

^{231a} He shows profoundly and perspicaciously how the Greek, scholastic and modern religious ground-motives have been lapsing into absolutisations and antinomies, but that it has not been the case with the Biblical religious ground-motive.

Despite the divergence of these two approaches to the History of Philosophy — as methods of historiography they complement each other — it is important to note that both of them depart from Scriptural assumptions that cast light on their respective fields of investigation — Vollenhoven departs from the significance of the law-idea for philosophical ‘thought’, and Dooyeweerd from the role of religion as foundation for philosophical ‘thought’— and it is also important that they critically account for their assumptions / starting point. How many philosophers are there that actually account for their assumptions in the light of which they *nolens volens* implicitly and / or explicitly examine and attempt to understand the History of Philosophy?

The *Discipline of Philosophical Movements / Schools* bisects both the Systematic Philosophy and the History of Philosophy. It distinguishes among the movements, the different variants within a movement, as revealed by the history of Philosophy, compares the different movements and also criticises them²³².

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V. FINAL REMARK

The purpose of this study was to give a broad survey of the *Philosophy of the Creation Idea*. For this reason, it was schematic. We could not really enter into detail.

Keen criticism from fellow-Calvinists must be welcomed. We have to continue struggling about the differences of opinion among us, and we should come to terms; much in this study — of this, I am fully aware — is still defective and preliminary.

I have learnt much also from the criticism of opponents / contenders; their penetrative criticism is necessary and welcome. We all live in the same reality, and our struggle in general is about the same problems. A mutual, critical discussion among practitioners of Calvinistic and non-Calvinistic Philosophy is not only possible but also quite necessary. To what extent do the analyses given above agree with reality, and why do they (not)? But then, the non-Calvinistic philosophers should be expected to also critically account for their own (implicit or explicit) assumptions (presuppositions) from which they depart in their thinking. Practising Philosophy is no private matter.

Philosophy is a science; it has its own field of inquiry; it bears the features of science. According to the light that God’s Word revelation casts on Philosophy, the practice of

²³² Cf. e.g. O. Külpe’s well-known *Einleitung in die Philosophie*.

Calvinistic Philosophy is a necessity. It requires — notwithstanding differences in nuances — maximal mutual cooperation and support. It also requires maximal cooperation, not only with kindred spirits practising a particular special discipline or intermediate discipline, but also with congenial spirits practising Theology. Practising Calvinistic Philosophy is an inspiring religious vocation and privilege that also serves the purpose of *soli Deo gloria*. Our Calvinistic Philosophy is still so very young — barely older than three-quarters of a century — and there is still immensely much to do. But — I am convinced — its inevitability has been understood; Calvinistic Philosophy has come to stay. May it persist into the distant future with its quest for the truth!

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